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Overseas contributors should nominate somebody resident in Great Britain willing to correct their proofs and deal with the subject of reprints.

Current numbers of the *Archives of Disease in Childhood* should be consulted for information concerning standard abbreviations, etc. In references to papers in the text the year of publication in parenthesis should follow the author's name. References at the end of the text should be in alphabetical order of authors' names, and titles of journals should be abbreviated according to the *World List of Scientific Periodicals*. Book titles should be followed by the place of publication.

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Health Saboteurs. By ROBERT WILLIAM DAVIS. (Pp. 306. \$4.00.) Published by Pageant Press.

The argument of this book is that the tonsils and adenoids are not, as is usually taught, a first line in the body's defences against infection, but are actually the easiest place of all for infections to gain admission. In support of this contention the author has first of all to attack the notion that 'the Almighty would not have put tonsils in your throat if it hadn't been for some good reason'. He does this with gusto and at length, pointing out that this is an argument of dogmatic religion and not of science, and that the body is as full of weak spots and inefficient reactions as the mind.

The tonsils, he points out, have some 4 sq. ft. of absorbing surface, surrounding crypts in which flourish bacteria in the most favourable circumstances. The argument that in this way the body acquires immunity to the multiplying organisms is not accepted, and the notions of the benefits conferred by tonsillar infections is compared with the recently abandoned one of the 'laudability' of pus in a healing wound. He also has no difficulty in showing up the logical fallacies of those who compare the amount of respiratory illness in groups with tonsils and groups without them.

The tonsil to Dr. Davis occupies the place of the large bowel in the ideas of Metchnikoff and Lane; a source of toxins from which proceed the greater part of all human degenerative processes. As is not infrequent in writings from the North American continent, the English race is chosen to supply instances of such degeneration: the English girls have no chins, owing to the prevalence of adenoids, though undue projection of the chin may have the same cause: the English failure to produce the ultimate example of human perfection in a heavy weight boxing champion is cited, though the running of a mile inside four minutes by a young man with a typical narrow English face will presumably have to be ignored. The flat Prussian back to the head is due to the ability of Prussian infants to sleep on their backs owing to the absence of adenoids in this favoured race. This seems to indicate that the long head of the Nordic races is a stigma of degeneration. Incidentally the cover of the book bears a picture of a child sleeping on all fours, a position which is supposed to be the only one in which many of those afflicted with adenoids can breathe. Those familiar with the wards of children's hospitals will have noticed that many normally breathing children sleep in this way for no better reason than that this is what they like.

Surprisingly little stress is laid upon the tonsils as a port of entry for tuberculosis, but this is perhaps because the author lives in a country where this infection in milk is regarded as disqualifying it for human consumption. Even in this country the rapidly growing prejudice against it is making this source of infection far less frequent.

From these arguments it follows that the tonsils should be routinely removed in every child without exception, though there is no mention of the unfortunate fact that with present techniques the operation is incomplete in a large proportion of cases. It is a pity that the author,

who has an interesting and very arguable case, spoils it by the over-emphasis and lack of proportion that characterize those possessed by a single fixed idea.

Year Book of Pediatrics, 1953-1954. Edited by SIDNEY S. GELLIS and ISAAC A. ABT. (Pp. 435; 114 figures.) 45s. Published by Year Book Publishers, Chicago. Distributed in Great Britain by Interscience Publishers, London. 1953.

This Year Book follows the plan and presentation of its predecessors and all the virtues and drawbacks of the previous numbers are retained. Thus, a very wide selection of papers of concern to the paediatrician is abstracted and as usual many of the abstracts are followed by comments which appear to constitute a one-way correspondence column, unfair in that the author whose abstract is discussed has no opportunity of replying.

It is a pleasure to observe, judging by the increasing number of articles abstracted from sources outside America, that the overwhelming emphasis in these Year Books on publications from the United States is at last being brought into a more proper perspective.

A Synopsis of Children's Diseases. By JOHN RENDLE-SHORT. (Pp. 620; illustrated. 32s. 6d.) Bristol: John Wright. 1954.

At long last somebody has done for children's diseases what Tidy did for general medicine years ago, and in presenting his synopsis Dr. Rendle-Short has followed very much the lines of presentation which Tidy has made a tradition. The size of the volume, running to 620 fairly closely printed pages, indicates the scope of paediatrics today, and it is remarkable how complete the author has made his subject matter. Controversies are stated simply and the reader is left to make up his own mind on debatable matters. This is proper for the audience to which the book is addressed who are in the main candidates for examinations, and there is no doubt that particularly for such examinations as the Diploma for Child Health the student will find this synopsis a valuable companion. It will also be referred to with profit by those more senior paediatricians who wish to refresh their memory on an unfamiliar facet of their speciality.

Eighth International Congress of Paediatrics

The eighth International Congress of Paediatrics will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from Sunday, July 22, until Friday, July 27, 1956.

It is planned to arrange a scientific and technical exhibition in connexion with the Congress.

Further information will be sent to the national paediatric associations and also published in *Acta Paediatrica* and *Helvetica Paediatrica Acta*.