

BOOK REVIEWS

L'accrescimento umano. By G. DE TONI. (Pp. 240. Lira 1,000-) Brescia, Italy: La Scuola.

Professor de Toni's book is one of a series dealing with the formative years of life, and it is addressed not only to doctors but to educationists and psychologists as well. In considering human growth the author has interpreted his subject widely, and he takes the reader by gentle stages from the conception of the embryo to the pubertal years and the completion of physical development. Not only the physical aspect of the subject is considered, however, but the causes and hormonal direction of growth and the psychological aspects of the total human being receive considerable attention. Somatotypes are explained diagrammatically, and there is an appendix of photographs illustrating different types of product of the human race.

A wealth of information is assembled in this short book, and it should be particularly useful as a background of knowledge for those concerned with the bringing up and education of children.

Infant Feeding and Feeding Difficulties. By PHILIP EVANS and RONALD MAC KEITH. Second edition. (Pp. x+277; 66 illustrations. 12s. 6d.) London: J. & A. Churchill, 1954.

That a second edition of this practical guide to the rearing of infants should have been called for three years after the first publication of the book shows that a real need for such a handbook existed. The lay-out of the book is little altered but parts have been revised and the clarity of some of the instructions, particularly on artificial feeding, have been greatly enhanced. These alterations have meant a small increase in the size of the book but the reader will gladly put up with the necessity for reading a little more for the additional ease of understanding.

As with the first edition, this new one will commend itself to all readers by its directness of thought and clarity of expression and last, but not least, by the ease with which information can be extracted from it. With its modest size and price it will continue to appeal to that great public of all professions who are concerned with bringing up babies.

Paediatrics for the Practitioner. Edited by WILFRID GAISFORD and REGINALD LIGHTWOOD. (Three volumes illustrated, plus complete index volume. £13 10s. per set.) London: Butterworth. 1953-1955.

These beautifully produced volumes are as much credit to the publishers as their contents are to the eminent team of paediatricians and others who have been co-opted from all over the world to compose *Paediatrics for the Practitioner*.

Whereas the many excellent textbooks of paediatrics available are generally aimed at the paediatrician, the

target of Gaisford and Lightwood is, as the title indicates, essentially the family doctor; while, therefore, there is an almost complete coverage of paediatric subjects, each is dealt with mainly from the point of view of what can be done by the family doctor in the patient's own home. The depressing size of the three volumes of subject matter is to some extent countered by the inclusion of a separate index volume, itself running to no less than 119 pages, the primary use of which in most instances will enable one to select the requisite volume for reading up a particular subject. A foreword says that advances in paediatrics will be dealt with in special supplementary volumes.

It will be interesting to see if the simplified presentation of its subject will seduce practitioners from their accustomed textbook of paediatrics to this monumental work—with its monumental price. There can be no doubt that *Paediatrics for the Practitioner* is as authoritative as any similar work and as up to date as any production of this kind can be. Indeed, editors, authors and publishers must have worked in very close and willing collaboration to have enabled the four volumes to appear in such a short space of time; all are deserving of congratulations.

Diseases of Infancy and Childhood, Vols. I and II. Second edition. Edited by LEONARD PARSONS and SEYMOUR BARLING, assisted by Clifford G. Parsons. (Pp. xli+2,075; 338 figures, 4 coloured plates. 168s.) Oxford University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege). 1954.

This is a book of 2,075 pages, on good paper, weighing just over half a stone.

There can be few textbooks which have experienced so many vicissitudes in their preparation. The previous edition was printed in 1933. Preparations for the second edition were far advanced in 1939, when war stopped further work. After the war different contributors had to be found, and in 1950 much of the script was in the galley proof stage when Sir Leonard Parsons died, and the work was held up once more. The present editors deserve sincere congratulations for finally completing the book in the face of great difficulties. The various revisions of the script which have of necessity been made have probably done much to bring about the very high quality of the final product, which is a great tribute to the present editors.

As the editors regretfully state in the preface, some of the treatments recommended are now out of date. These concern almost entirely the use of antibiotics, cortisone, and a few specific drugs such as those for threadworms, and it involves only a very small fraction of the book. It is not a vital matter. It is virtually impossible to prepare a text of this magnitude which will be up to date by the time it is published. As long as that

fact is realized, it will detract little from the very real value of these volumes.

It will always be impossible to produce a book with the whole of which everyone will agree. When a book is criticized, the fault may lie in the book or in the critic. This book is remarkably devoid of what American reviewers of British books rightly term 'quaint treatments'. There are a few, but very few. Few physicians will agree with the statement that phimosis causes hydro-nephrosis, masturbation or enuresis.

It is a pity that the common practice of giving diet sheets for normal children is perpetuated. Who really measures out 1 oz. of minced meat or fish and 2½ oz. of milk pudding for the 12- to 18-month-old child?

The weakest section of the book is that devoted to child psychiatry, neuroses and psychoneuroses. Who really believes that contraceptives may cause mental deficiency? That nail-biting is caused by worms, chronic dyspepsia or nasal catarrh? That enuresis should be treated by the removal of tonsils, by ultra-violet light, massage, tonics, a plain and unstimulating diet, the avoidance of bulky starch meals, a flannel binder round the loins, or an appliance for preventing the child sleeping on his back? That 'a baby with flatulence may smile during sleep'? That 'fidgeting habits' are due to decayed teeth, infected tonsils, enlarged glands, chronic nasopharyngeal catarrh, or conjunctivitis, or that it should be treated by arsenic, massage, ultra-violet light, or a mixture of hydrobromic acid and nux vomica?

On looking at the index no mention could be found of accidents or accident prevention: destructiveness, quarrelsomeness, jealousy, pleurodynia, frequency of micturition, normal puberty, abdominal pain, and, surely one of the commonest of all symptoms in children, poor appetite or anorexia in the well child due to forcing food on him. It would be useful if, in the next edition, those and other common symptoms in children were discussed in detail in sections of their own.

These criticisms concern a very small section of the book. They should certainly not deter anyone from buying it, for it contains very many first-class sections, and very little indeed of poor quality. Amongst many excellent sections, that of F. J. W. Miller and the late Sir James Spence on neonatal diseases is outstanding.

One very much hopes that the present editors will see to it that few years elapse before a third edition is published. It would be most regrettable if the book were allowed to lapse when it has reached such a very high standard. It is the reviewer's considered opinion that this book is a great credit to the Birmingham school, and that it will remain a fitting and brilliant tribute to its designer, Sir Leonard Parsons.

Modern Mothercraft: A Guide to Parents. Third edition. By HELEN DEEM and NORA P. FITZGIBBON. (Pp. 241. Price not stated.) Dunedin: Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children. 1954.

This revised edition of a rightly popular handbook is notable because it records the abandoning of 'percentage feeding' in what was its country of origin. Milk

mixtures are now made stronger than the old 'equal parts' formula from the fourteenth day of life, and although even now undiluted milk is not allowed until the ninth month, the present step forward must be welcomed. The idea of 'humanized' milk has therefore been discarded. The rigidity of the older feeding programmes has also been modified by a somewhat grudging reference to self-demand feeding, but this apart there is in many sections a welcome modern outlook in many aspects of the mother-baby relationship. A section on prevention of accidents in the home is full of wise advice.

Cystic Fibrosis of the Pancreas in Infants and Children.

By CHARLES D. MAY. (Pp. 93; 16 figures. 21s. 6d.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1954.

This monograph follows on the heels of Bodian's *Fibrocystic Disease of the Pancreas* which it resembles in everything but size, price and number of illustrations. In a small space Dr. May has managed to condense all that is known about this very interesting condition, and if each separate disease needs its own handbook this will be most adequate for cystic fibrosis of the pancreas. No dogmatic standpoint is adopted concerning the aetiology of the disease and not all will agree with the author in dismissing so summarily the estimation of the anti-thrombin titre of the blood in diagnosis; yet the book must have been in the hands of the printers for a considerable time and presumably a second edition will amplify this point.

The monograph is beautifully printed and bound and must be almost the lightest medical book to be produced for years.

Manuel Pratique de Vaccination par le B.C.G. By R. MANDE; foreword by Robert Debré. (Pp. 200; 13 plates, 4 in colour. Fr. frs. 950.-) Published by Le Centre International de l'Enfance. Paris: Masson et Cie. 1954.

This little paper-backed book of 200 pages, the sixth monograph published by the International Children's Centre in Paris, is an excellent practical guide for anyone having to undertake B.C.G. vaccination in children because it is the outcome of the considerable personal experience of the author in the B.C.G. clinic associated with the Children's Centre.

The first six sections each concludes with a full summary of the main points discussed. The details of the various techniques are well set out, the complications are discussed, with suggestions as to prevention and treatment, and the importance of adequate follow-up is stressed. The vexed questions of the innocuousness of B.C.G. and exogenous tuberculous infection after vaccination are fully considered and, needless to say, Calmette is once again vindicated. The presentation, however, is fair and reasoned. The seventh and final section is a recapitulation of the essential practical principles and is clear and concise.

There is an admirable foreword by Professor Debré. Fourteen coloured and 26 monotone illustrations—all very well reproduced—add to the clarity of the work. The references, though few, are valuable and up-to-date.