BOOK REVIEWS


This book is full of useful and important information, and Dr. Gairdner has been fortunate in his team of contributors.

The last 15 years have seen many new advances in paediatrics, and during this period our conception of certain well-known diseases, such as coeliac disease and Hirschsprung's disease, has undergone considerable change. It is therefore particularly apt that this book should appear now, at a time when a review of this field of medicine is really called for. The chapters on establishment of respiration and the care of the newborn infant, which are contributed by Dr. Gairdner himself, are both excellent, and the common sense shown in the discussion of such subjects as umbilical hernia and circumcision is most refreshing. The chapter on prematurity includes a full discussion of retroental fibroplasia and the other relatively rare but important complications met with; this is very well done, but it would have been useful if the higher vitamin D and iron requirements of the premature infant had been stressed, although these are generally known.

There is a most authoritative account of haemolytic disease of the newly born, but there are surely cases where a simple transfusion is called for in this disease, or when for some reason an exchange transfusion is impracticable, and it would have been helpful if this had been mentioned.

A discussion on infant feeding is apt to be rather dull and stale affair, but it is made interesting and stimulating in the section devoted to it in this book.

Oesophageal atresia and hiatus hernia are well discussed, but in the chapter dealing with Hirschsprung's disease, which is good, it is a little surprising to find that among other causes of chronic constipation no mention is made of a fissure or shallow ulcer in the anal region, for such conditions, producing pain and spasm as they do, are surely the commonest cause of constipation in young children and deserve to be more frequently emphasized.

The aetiology of gastro-enteritis is fully considered, and its treatment, especially the management of dehydration and electrolyte depletion, is gone into very well.

Immunization against infectious disease is dealt with in a most helpful manner.

Coeliac disease and fibrocyctic disease are discussed, each in a chapter to itself, but it is a pity that a fuller and more vivid clinical picture of the latter condition was not drawn.

The article on intersexuality and the adrenogenital syndrome is difficult reading for those not well founded in endocrinology, but it is full of information.

The chapter on sudden death in infancy is most interesting, and the subject of congenital heart disease is well done.

The other chapters, which include cerebral palsy and tuberculosis, are all good and well worth reading.

This book should prove a valuable addition to the library of those interested in paediatrics, more especially if they already have experience in this field of medicine. It does not claim to be exclusive, but it is still a most useful book to possess. It is well produced, illustrated and indexed, and the references given in each chapter are very full.


This book sets out to be a practical manual for students and practitioners to be used, the authors claim, as an aid to early diagnosis 'at the bedside or in the office'.

The patient's approach to his doctor is through his symptoms and the doctor's to his patient via the clinical examination; so the book deals almost entirely with these two aspects of medicine. After a brief introduction there is a long section on the clinical examination, with an evaluation of all the possible physical signs and of a great variety of laboratory aids to diagnosis. A second long section is made up of a classified list of almost every symptom known, with all the conditions that might cause them. This section is highly systemized, and every device of heading, sub-heading, Roman numerals, capital letters, small letters and bracketed numbers has been used to facilitate a rapid search for the appropriate condition.

The book is undoubtedly a difficult one to use, the layout being unfamiliar to the English student, who is at first almost repelled by the arrangement. One can, for instance, choose between 80 causes of vomiting, 41 of splenomegaly and over 90 of cyanosis. Nevertheless, it contains a great deal more accurate and easily obtainable factual information than most medical textbooks twice its size and, in an obscure and difficult case could well be considerably more helpful. Whether it is possible or not to come to an accurate diagnosis by posting from reference to reference will depend largely on the reader. On some shelves this book might become the most well-thumbed manual of paediatrics; on others it may well remain untouched for years.