

BOOK REVIEWS

Atemübungen mit Kindern. By I. MÜLLER-GIES and CHR. LICHTENBERG; Foreword by B. de Rudder. (Pp. 32; 25 illustrations. DM. 3.90.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1955.

This booklet is apparently one of three, the others being on foot and postural exercises.

The emphasis is on rhythmical movements. Whilst avoiding discussion of the condition in front of the children, the teacher sees that the movements are carried out correctly each day. It would appear that asthma and many other chest conditions are treated in the same way. The children are exercised for 15 minutes and then given a rest period, lying flat and quiet.

The booklet is divided into sections describing exercises while lying, sitting, etc., but does not apparently give any indication of whether the exercises are taken in series or whether exercises are started lying down and then progress to sitting.

On the whole the instructions are not as good as those issued by the leading British hospitals, and the standard and type of rhythmical exercises are below those taught by educational gymnasts in this country. However, there are a few interesting variations on exercises used in England and it is worth studying these.

Textbook of Paediatrics. Sixth edition. Edited by WALDO E. NELSON, with the collaboration of seventy contributors. (Pp. xviii+1,581; 438 figures. 75s.) London and Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company. 1954.

The quality of this comprehensive textbook of paediatrics, now appearing in its sixth edition under the sole editorship of Waldo Nelson, lies in its emphasis on the scientific basis of medicine. Each section opens with long paragraphs of anatomical, physiological and biochemical considerations, against which are contrasted pathological and clinical descriptions, in turn followed by sections on treatment as far as possible based on a rational application of modern therapeutics. With each new edition this tendency has progressed step by step and reflects the fundamental changes in medical thought over the last quarter of a century.

The beautiful clinical descriptions of disease beloved of and so well done by the older generation of writers, inevitably go by the board; but there are a few conditions in this book in which the treatment of the clinical picture has been unnecessarily niggardly and even faulty. Nephrocalcinosis, for instance, considered as a disorder of bones and a problem in renal tubular physiology, is unrecognizable as the syndrome of either Lightwood or Albright; and the condition in this country most often referred to as hiatus hernia is clearly described and obviously taken to be a short oesophagus. With occasional exceptions the subject matter is reasonably up to

date, the time lag being indicated by the absence, in a book the preface of which is dated August, 1954, of any mention of gluten.

There are, as before, numerous excellent photographs and pictures as well as copious, comprehensive, only occasionally incomprehensible, plans and charts, and an almost embarrassing quantity of statistical information. It has always seemed to the reviewer a prolific use of 14 valuable pages in the chapter on growth and development to table in seven different percentiles figures for heights in centimetres and inches, and weights in kilos and pounds for both sexes and for all ages from birth to eighteen months at three-monthly, and to 18 years at six-monthly intervals—some 2,296 figures—as well as those for head, chest and abdominal circumference in the same lavish detail.

Such criticism cannot detract from the general excellence of this well-known textbook. The 15-page appendix contains a host of information on normal blood and C.S.F. values, composition of therapeutic solutions, food values and conversion tables, whilst the 62-page, three-column index is ample and accurate.

The paper and printing are only moderate in quality which, with the book's deservedly wide circulation, accounts for its moderate price; at 75s. it must be considered one of the best values for money.

Kwashiorkor. By H. C. TROWELL, J. N. P. DAVIES and R. F. A. DEAN. (Pp. xii+308, illustrated. 50s.) London: Edward Arnold. 1954.

To the reviewer of this book the subject is entirely new. To be critical of its contents is therefore difficult, but it has made instructive and at times fascinating reading. It is a report of a physician, pathologist, research worker and paediatrician on a nutritional problem of world wide distribution and importance which they have studied in Makerere College, Kampala, Uganda.

They believe that kwashiorkor is a protein deficiency disease which can be treated and prevented by milk protein, and they marshal the evidence in sections on the history of the disease, its clinical picture, its pathology and biochemistry, together with its treatment and prevention.

The greater part of the book is devoted to kwashiorkor in children; the condition in the adult may not necessarily be exactly the same disease. With most of the disorders of the temperate zone well described it must have been a great thrill to the authors to find such a common disease to investigate, and they are to be congratulated on presenting such a readable and scientific account of their researches.

The book is well illustrated and produced, and it is important that paediatricians should be well informed of the disease because of the nutritional principles involved.