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but simply; addressed, perhaps, more to the future obstetrician than to the budding paediatric consultant. Many of the vital neonatal statistics (Marcelle Lelong) and figures of foetal deaths (R. Laumonier) make useful comparison with our more familiar English figures, and the plea for the earliest diagnosis of oesophageal atresia (Marcelle Lelong) is worth reading if only for its presentation and style. Briefly, Dr. Lelong says that early diagnosis is so vital that the obstetricians or midwife’s bag is incomplete without an oesophageal sound which should invariably be used on the occurrence of any one of the easily recognizable symptoms.

A reliance on caffeine, as the drug le plus efficace et le moins nocive (surely quite incompatible opposites) in the treatment of white asphyxia (A. Rossier) sounds anachronistic to English ears, and the prophylaxis of maternity hospital and neonatal infection (R. Joseph) by complete asepsis is a method of avoiding rather than facing the essential issue, the wickedness, as it were, of this bacteria-ridden world. A good third of the book is occupied by a review of haemolytic disease of the newborn (S. Bohut, F. Lepage and J. Bernard) which, though necessarily brief, is easy to understand.

For anyone approaching D.C.H., wishing simultaneously to air his French and revise his knowledge of neonatal paediatrics, this volume makes easy and pleasant reading. The book, though paper backed, is well got up, and the printing unusually good.


This account of the effects of ‘maternal deprivation’, as we now call it, on French babies and young children is the result of observations by a group of 16 people working under the direction of Dr. Aubry. The subject has now worried many of us for some years and in spite of various excellent publications, including the pioneer works of Dr. John Bowlby, we wait to remain completely convince[d] of the very severe effects which these separations may cause. We look to serious workers in the field to do this.

Dr. Aubry’s methods of assessing the degree of interference with the normal and happy development of the children are open to much criticism (the Gesell test, the Wetzel Grid, the assessment of ‘health’ are indeed controversial matters in themselves), and there is a lack of control figures, while subjective impressions abound. No references are given. It has been said by journalists that it is necessary to ‘personalize’ science to make a point clear in some forms of writing, and while quoting of particular case histories is admirable in many publications, here we find dramatic accounts of Bernard, Christine and Paul which are clearly intended to shock and sadden us.

This kind of publication does harm to the cause. The plan of research set out to show the effects and dangers of separation from the mother, and it is clear that much work went into the accumulation of results. Unhappily the short monograph has fallen between those two stools which always produce such an irritating result: concise scientific presentation of facts, and scientific discussion heavily biased by subjective ideas and the (sometimes admirable) desire to push over the point. When such a subject is so fraught with difficulty of investigation it is a great pity that such a method of presentation was chosen.

Work in this field has certainly done one great service, namely, to stimulate us to be anxious about the care of children in hospital, and for institutions to think hard about the possible psychological dangers risked. This book ends with an excellent constructive criticism of the present situation in France; it suggests ways of avoiding the possible dangers for children actually in such situations; and, finally, makes a moving plea for more work and interest in the field.


Two paediatricians who have become parents have formidable authority for writing of their experiences, and it was to be expected that these authors would add to the massive library of advice that already exists to help parents with the upbringing of their children.

The advice given in this book has been thoughtfully pondered and given with deep gravity. There are particularly excellent chapters on the pattern of development and the behaviour difficulties of childhood, which between them occupy most of the book.

The writing is straightforward and simple with only occasional difficult passages, though few intelligent mothers would have the patience to unravel the instructions on ‘How to Work Out the Quantity’ on pp. 78 and 79, which together with the relevant Tables 4 to 6 will surely need recasting. The illustrative sketches are apt and diverting, and the photographs, many by Professor Illingworth himself, are magnificent, and redeem the book of its lack of humour. Where the text drives home its points with almost deadening repetition, the photographs, technically of professional quality, catch moments of childhood aggression, pathos and charm with sensibility and streaks of sardonic humour.

Parents will work their way through this book, and be greatly helped in their task.


This is a very good general and statistical survey of pre-school mortality. It is full of clear and concise statement, together with carefully checked data. The author has gone back a long way so that he may see true trends and comparative mortality rates, and he indicates that the decline in pre-school child mortality has been achieved much more by the relatively slow progress of increasing social consciousness and improvement in social conditions than by the apparently more spectacular results of curative medicine. In this respect he