but simply; addressed, perhaps, more to the future obstetrician than to the budding paediatric consultant.

Many of the vital neonatal statistics (Marcelle Leelong) 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 Leelong) is worth reading if only for its presentation and style. Briefly, Dr. Leelong 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 convinced 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 due 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 reiteration, 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
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believes that child mortality can be a sensitive indication of health conditions, especially to the social and economic backgrounds. The overall picture may give the impression ‘that a dream of social paediatrics is being realized’.

The reductions of the male birth surplus by neonatal death are gradually being countered and the effects also in the pre-school age group are such as will enable the male surplus to change only a little. From 1 to 4 years of age the child’s chance of dying becomes less as his age increases. However, the death rate of the 1 to 4-year-olds is still as high as that of the 35 to 40-year-olds. The higher mortality due to accidents is the main cause of the persistence of an excess mortality of boys.

Seasonal factors in the mortality are evident. In general, winter adds to the stresses and strains. The complex factors causing decline of mortality has a greater effect in summer. There is a slightly higher mortality rate in rural areas than in towns. Some emphasis is laid upon the state of health of the child before the fatal illness as a significant determinant of the end. This was especially noted in undeveloped areas.

In the figures given, the remarkably favourable trend in tuberculosis is clear, but the sad story concerning violent death, especially since 1950, is related. By comparison, Canada seems a dangerous place for pre-school children (50 deaths per 100,000), in the Netherlands 45, and in England and Wales 24; in 1950 in West Germany 59, in Norway 52, in Australia 38, in France 33, in U.S.A. 38. The situation is, therefore, fairly general in its contribution to pre-school deaths.

The author draws a conclusion that the mortality due to road accidents in pre-school children proves to be not directly dependent on the intensity of traffic, but rather on the care and supervision in the family and in general on the related social and hygienic conditions. Deaths from poisoning add to the violent deaths in similar manner. Accident-proneness is considered in relation to the possibilities of the child’s individual psychic structure; but little is really known about this. It does suggest any campaign against accidents is of a medical character.

Mortality from tumours remains steady, but there is a slightly increasing figure for the reticuloses.

It is noted that Holland is still troubled with fatal diphtheria in the pre-school age group. Child mortality (age 1-4) in the period 1900-50 fell by 90% in Netherlands, 92% in Sweden, 93% in England, 85% in France. In other words, the author would have us note that the pre-school age mortality is an even more sensitive criterion of social and hygienic conditions than the infant mortality, and that this decline started earlier than the fall in infant mortality and that the pre-school age mortality showed higher peaks during the war years.

Dr. van Gelderen is optimistic: the expectation is warranted that within 15 years the pre-school mortality will decrease to less than 1 per 1,000, or nearly half the present. Then, he states, accidents, congenital defects, neoplasms and reticuloses will account for 75%. Perhaps new discoveries and a betterment of the accident rate will even improve upon this hopeful expectation.

This volume is very readable and has a comprehensive bibliography.


This is a report, published by the Commonwealth Fund, of an important investigation of nearly a thousand ‘perinatal’ deaths by a sub-committee of the committee on public health relations of the New York Academy of Medicine. The study, which began in 1950, has produced a large number of interesting figures which have been analysed and commented on by Dr. Schuyler G. Kohl. The most arresting findings are that 35% of the deaths were considered to be preventable and that 40% of the deaths associated with Caesarean section could have been prevented by wiser use of the procedure. The more experienced the medical officer in charge and the better the general quality of the hospital work the less were the number of preventable deaths. Paediatricians, obstetricians and midwives will find much in this book to encourage them to better work.


This work covers a field in which there has not been any adequate previous attempt at complete summation of the available mass of published material. The authors have drawn on world sources, published up to and including 1954, as well as on their own considerable experience, and critically review the knowledge available on each disease entity. The introductory chapters on the nature of viruses and rickettsiae and on the diagnosis of diseases caused by these agents are full and instructive, though necessarily greatly condensed. Though no details of technique are given in a book which aims to instruct the clinician rather than the practising virologist, the tables of the methods for investigation of suspected virus infections in general and of each infection in particular are both clear and comprehensive. The mass of the book naturally is devoted to the clinical picture of the diseases affecting the skin and mucous membranes, and in every case theory and fact regarding the pathology and the treatment are critically and objectively examined. Where doubts exist the authors present all the generally accepted data, merely adding their considered personal opinions, and their presentation of the methods of therapy openly reflects the non-specific ways which must, for the moment, be followed by the clinician.

The text is beautifully illustrated, in colour wherever beneficial, and the style is pleasant and most readable. Folklore and literary illusions lighten the chapters and save the text from being a clear but dull scientific presentation of fact. The work must be a useful addition to the shelves and desks of all who deal with the virus and rickettsial diseases of the skin, eye and mucous membranes of man.