ARCHIVES OF DISEASE IN CHILDHOOD


It is usually said that textbooks are at least five years behind the most recent advances in any subject. This book remedies that situation as far as infant feeding is concerned. It is a clear, concise account of the present-day ideas on the subject, and gives precise instructions, advocating the more liberal feeding advised to-day. If amongst doctors and nurses there are still some who fear overfeeding, or worry about slight variations in composition, this book will help to remove their doubts. It will support mothers who, I suspect, often felt that the rigid schedules of the past were wrong.

It contains a wealth of factual information mainly in the form of tables, and reflects the mature opinion of two experienced and widely read clinicians, retaining only those ideas of the past which have stood the test of time, without advocating doctrines not yet fully accepted. It discusses difficulties likely to be met and their management. One or two subjects perhaps might have been more fully discussed, such as 'rooming-in' and 'demand feeding', and a minor criticism of the later chapters on such subjects as prematurity, diarrhoea, vomiting and constipation is that they are perhaps not detailed enough for doctors, yet too detailed for mothers. These, however, form a comparatively minor section of this excellent book which has some valuable diets and suggestions for feeding infants and children suffering from conditions requiring special food such as coeliac disease, obesity, etc. The book is well indexed and the numerous references are listed and because of its style is likely to have a wide appeal. It should be read by all who are concerned with infant feeding and it should find a place in the library of every hospital, welfare clinic and doctor, especially at the reasonable price at which it is published.


This textbook of tuberculosis in childhood sets out to cover every aspect of the disease and, in very large measure, succeeds in its endeavour. In eight sections containing 30 chapters and almost 500 pages the subject is dealt with systematic thoroughness and a vast wealth of detail. Sections are so arranged that each broad aspect of the disease is separately considered, so that whilst section 2 deals with the primary complex and its complications, section 4 with widespread tubercle and section 5 with the tertiary phase, differential diagnosis in section 6 and treatment in section 8, each deal with all forms of the disease. This type of arrangement gives the book an academic, at times unrealistic, flavour, perhaps unavoidable, which is the sacrifice which has been paid for the sake of quality and comprehensive detail.

The author's passion for the latter is illustrated by his paragraphs on the influence on tuberculosis exerted by the weather and by nutrition, to take two examples. He becomes involved in rather facile expositions of the biological value of the structure of proteins on the one hand, and on the other of the structure of cold and warm fronts. These criticisms are minor ones only, and are more than offset by the massive erudition that makes this book invaluable as a reference and teaching manual.

A major omission, and a more important criticism, is the absence of any section or chapter on the social aspects of tuberculosis. Only here and there in the text are there occasional comments and figures indicating that the author is concerned with the impact that the disease makes on the community, on its cost in ill-health and unhappiness as well as in lives, and perhaps above all on the changing pattern of the disease under the impact of improved social conditions, antibiotics and active immunization.

This second volume has been largely rewritten, and is luxuriously produced, profusely illustrated, clearly printed in easy German, contains many references at the end of each chapter and there is a reasonable index.


When Paediatrics for the Practitioner appeared we were promised that we would be kept up to date with advances in children's medicine, and this present volume keeps that editorial promise. The volume contains an article on the physical changes of puberty by Lorimer Dodds and a monograph by A. W. Woodruff on the care of children in the tropics. There are also 18 pages called 'Noter-up'. This not very elegant word after due research was found to denote in fewer letters a 'bringer-up-to-dater'. Much useful information on such subjects as lead poisoning, leukaemia and the antibiotics are contained in this section. To use the book properly now the subject should be read in the main volumes and the 'Noter-up' consulted for any really recent advances. This first supplement of Paediatrics concludes with 10 more pages of index.


The authors present a detailed account of their attempt to estimate the incidence of mental abnormalities in 500 children with congenital syphilis admitted to 'The Little Home' in Stockholm since December, 1900.

Their findings confirm those of previous workers in demonstrating that there is an abnormally high incidence of mental deficiency, mental subnormality and behaviour disorders in these subjects; that these abnormalities are more frequently due to environmental and hereditary factors than to syphilis; but that in some cases syphilitic involvement of the nervous system is directly responsible for mental deficiency.

The material is carefully considered and although the difficulties inherent in this type of investigation militate against clear-cut results, there is much that is of interest in this monograph.