BOOK REVIEWS


These two volumes are the second edition of a work, the first volume of the first edition having appeared more than 20 years ago. The increase in basic knowledge in this period of time has been so great that the second edition is virtually a new work, consisting of contributions by 26 authors.

The books are a remarkable assembly of biological and physiological facts concerning every aspect of the newborn and developing child, and there is a hint of the enormous difficulties which must have beset the editor of such a compendium in the fact that, while both volumes bear the date 1954, they were not received for review until November, 1955. The enormous worth of volumes such as these is clear to the most cursory inspection and the painstaking accuracy and minute detail with which the subject matter is handled are tributes to both authors and editor alike. Close inspection of the subject matter shows how wide-ranging is the information assembled and, indeed, it is difficult to think of anything concerning the being and development of the child which is not considered in detail.

Professor Brock is to be congratulated on his production. It is a pity that the work is in German, as otherwise it would cater for a far greater field. Perhaps Professor Brock and the publishers have considered the possibility of a translation into the English language—it would be assured of a warm welcome.

Die Papierchromatographie in der Kinderheilkunde.

Anyone familiar with paediatric literature of recent years will know the name of Dr. Bickel in connexion with the application of paper chromatography to the metabolic problems of infancy and childhood. Dr. Bickel brings her experiences of Zurich and Birmingham and, most recently, Marburg, to those of Dr. Souchon’s in Kiel and Bremen, and together they have written a monograph dealing exhaustively with their chosen subject.

There are sections on technical methods for the identification of amino-acids and sugars, and the normal physiological findings are considered in infancy and childhood. The bulk of the monograph, not unnaturally, considers the behaviour of the amino-acids in various diseases in which abnormal amino-acid patterns are expected or known. There is a short section on the different types of glycosuria and a special section on amino-acids in the duodenal juice by F. Wewalka.

A wealth of biochemical and clinical data is correlated factually and authoritatively, and to all those whose work is concerned with inborn errors of metabolism and the amino-acids this book can be recommended without hesitation. Archiv für Kinderheilkunde, whose publication it is, are to be congratulated on their choice and the excellent production of their 31st supplement.


This is a remarkable 308-page monograph by Tibor Benedek, of Chicago, who is said on the title page to be Assistant Clinical Professor of Dermatology and Syphilology at the Stritch School of Medicine, and to be attending dermatologist at the Salvation Army Medical Centre in Chicago. The author states:

‘During the last twenty-five years, by the use of adequate tools of research (bacteriology, immunology, histopathology) the writer has been able to show in a number of detailed publications that a group of the commonest skin diseases, i.e., pemphigus, seborrhoeic dermatitis, psoriasis vulgaris, pityriasis rosea and hidradenitis suppurativa, are cutaneous reactions to a single causative bacterial agent, the permanent endoparasite of the human race, the B. endoparasiticus Benedek 1927.’

The organism, he says, is also the cause of rheumatoid arthritis. In his introduction he castigates dermatologists, rheumatologists, bacteriologists and other research workers for their obtuseness in not making this discovery and for their insufficient knowledge of the great achievements of investigators of past decades. In this respect he refers in part to the pioneering work of Gilbert Bannatyne, one time consulting physician of the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, Bath, England, for his outstanding contributions in obtaining the first blood culture of dumb-bell shaped bacilli from cases of rheumatoid arthritis identical with those which he found in synovial and joint connective tissues.

He claims that the organism can be repeatedly recovered from cantharides blisters, and says that the only treatment of value is a vaccine made from his organism. He discusses a specific allergic skin test with the vaccine, but remarks that no control cases are possible, because every human being is allergic to his own endoparasite, and every human being has this endoparasite within him.

The occasional ameliorating effect of pregnancy is explained by the fact that the foetal endoparasite enters the maternal circulation and most probably acts like an intravenous vaccine perfusion during the whole of pregnancy, causing the desensitization of the allergic synovial and articular tissues.

Comment is superfluous.