BOOK REVIEWS


The value of the radiological examination of the alimentary tract in infancy has been recognized during recent years. The radiological examination of infants requires special techniques which are not described in textbooks of radiology, paediatrics or surgery. The author has tried to make good this deficiency and has achieved his aim in a book which is based largely on his own experience.

The first part on the oesophagus contains sections on atresia, disorders of swallowing, oesophagitis, duplications and various extrinsic and intrinsic abnormalities. This section, the second on the diaphragm, and the third on the stomach and duodenum, give an excellent account of the many abnormalities of these structures which are peculiar to infancy and describe methods which the author has found to be effective. The case records have been skilfully chosen to illustrate and emphasize points made previously in the text.

The remaining sections on the small intestine, colon, rectum, and miscellaneous conditions of the liver, pancreas, and retroperitoneal tissues are also more than adequate, but conditions of extreme rarity might have been in small type instead of some of the case reports illustrating diagnostic difficulties which enhance the value of this section.

Clinicians may doubt the value of radiology in the diagnosis of acute appendicitis while radiologists may feel that clinicians give them too few opportunities to investigate babies who vomit persistently. The author has demonstrated how helpful radiology may be in cases of so-called feeding disorder, but he does not indicate in how many cases the examination is negative or what percentage of patients are examined radiologically.

The book is strongly recommended not only to radiologists who will learn technical methods applicable to small subjects, their dangers and their fallacies, but also to paediatricians and surgeons, many of whom will now expect greater assistance from their radiologists in the elucidation of difficult cases of alimentary tract diseases.

The author is to be congratulated in writing on a somewhat neglected field of radiology, while credit must also go to the publishers for the quality of reproduction of the numerous radiographs. The reviewer found only one error in spelling and that in a proper name, surely unusual accuracy for a new book, or better, for a first edition, which will surely be followed by further editions.


This paediatric annual conforms to the tradition established in the last decade, its only departure therefrom being that perhaps one-third of the articles abstracted are from sources other than the North American literature.

Most of the journals abstracted, apart from the United States and Canada, originate in the NATO countries, and practising paediatricians read these journals or are aware of their contents. There must be much work of interest appearing in non-NATO languages in journals from non-NATO countries, not seen or too difficult to read by the average English-speaking paediatrician. In order to obtain a more global comprehension of advances in children's disease, would it be asking Dr. Gellis too much if in future editions of the Year Book of Pediatrics some attention could be paid to the journals of the non-NATO countries to which the ordinary person does not have access?

The 1956-57 volume abstracts some 350 articles and many of the abstracts are followed by invited criticism or comment. The volume is as beautifully produced as always.


This year book, now in its 74th year, is too well established in the esteem of the profession to require commendation. No volume of the sort can be comprehensive but it covers a vast field, has an excellent index, and the writers have provided material which will interest members of all branches of medicine. The paediatrician will find many articles dealing with subjects in his own field, besides many which he will read for their general interest. The editors draw special attention to an excellent review of recent work on poliomyelitis, including an account of field trials of the vaccine, and also to an article on steatorrhea. The latter ranges from fat absorption and excretion, aetiology and prognosis in coeliac disease, and radiological appearance of the small intestine in idiopathic steatorrhea to sprue-like syndromes associated with stagnation in a blind loop of gut, sprue-like syndromes with agammaglobulinemia, and to 'intestinal lipodystrophy,' a syndrome new to the reviewer which exhibits the features of sprue and a migratory polyarthritis.

Advances in cardiac surgery naturally receive attention and the article on coarctation of the aorta indicates increasing recognition of its heavy mortality in infancy and the possibilities of treatment at this age. An article on vital statistics gives a great array of facts; one which