

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Pediatric Gynecology**, 4th ed. By GOODRICH C. SCHAUFFLER. (Pp. 349; 84 figures. 57s.) London: Interscience Publishers. Chicago: Year Book Publishers. 1958.

The fourth edition of this useful book has been slightly enlarged and contains many fresh illustrations. A seven-page section on female pseudohermaphroditism has been added and 'masturbation is, at last, given a monographic consideration'; no less than 17 pages! Here and there the author seems, perhaps, unduly concerned over the upbringing and *mores* of the American teenager, and his ideas on such going's-on as teenage pregnancy, masturbation, female circumcision and even clitoridectomy in that surprising country leave the (English) reviewer confused and somewhat breathless. The section, however, on the truly pathological disorders of the female child's genital and urinary systems are straightforward, clearly if wordily expressed and useful, and the appropriate aspects of endocrinology, chemo- and antibiotic therapy and treatment with steroids are all clear and up to date.

The subject is certainly worth a book to itself and this volume more than adequately fulfils its purposes.

**The Compleat Pediatrician**. By W. C. DAVISON and JEANA DAVISON LEVINHAL. (Pp. vi + 257. 35s.) London: Staples Press. 1958.

The fact that seven editions have been published in America is evidence of the popularity of this book in its land of origin. Further editions have been or are in process of being published in Japan, Spain and Italy. An English edition has been considered essential and *The Compleat Pediatrician* is now published for the first time in Great Britain. The reviewer is uncertain as to what exactly is implied by the use of the term 'English edition'. The spelling employed in the title shows no departure from American practice.

There is none who can but admire the immense industry devoted to bringing this book up to date without sacrifice of its unique character. It is small wonder that Professor Davison has felt the need for assistance and he is to be congratulated on enlisting the services of his daughter, herself a paediatrician, as co-author. The original format of the book has been retained. Those conversant with earlier editions will find no difficulty in recognizing amendments and additions made in the light of recent advances in modern paediatrics. Greater use is made of practical footnotes than formerly. This is to be commended as is the introduction of a few carefully selected references.

There can be no questioning the value of this book if judiciously used as a discriminating guide to the collection of clinical facts relevant to the individual case. The volume is not to be regarded as a short cut to diagnosis

or treatment. On the contrary it is an aid to memory and thoroughness. As the authors themselves emphasize, training and experience are essential to reliable evaluation of clinical facts no matter how meticulously amassed. Recognition of this fact is essential if the maximum help is to be derived from this admirable publication.

**The Management of Childhood Asthma**. By FREDERIC SPEER. (Pp. xii + 116; 13 figures. 36s.) London: Blackwell Scientific Publications; Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1958.

Any doctor, except an allergist, will read this primer with mounting impatience at the lopsided view given of children with asthma. Calm will return when he realizes that the book deals with the treatment of childhood asthma and not of asthmatic children, and that the text concerns only asthma due to specific allergens in the United States. Within these boundaries here is an excellent account of history taking, skin testing, elimination diets for food allergens, orthodox drug treatment and hyposensitization methods.

Of 315 cases studied in the mould and pollen laden atmosphere of Kansas City and its environs the recorded sensitivities were to alternaria (67.6%), ragweed (42.9%), housedust (38.1%), helminthosporium (22.5%) and grass (17.8%). All the rest rate low (cat, 4.1%; dog, 2.2%). Between the lines Dr. Speer reveals himself as a shrewd and doubtless highly effective physician, with more in his management than pure allergy, but as director of a paediatric allergy clinic he has to be loyal to the unitarian view that asthma is always due to specific allergens if we are clever enough to find them. He recognizes (and treats) 'unusual psychic stress' as a contributing factor. From the only alternative conception mentioned, that of a psychogenic origin, he dissents like most physicians and most psychiatrists. How sad that asthma and allergy clinics have to nail some special colour to the mast. The truth could be that asthma is a symptom and not a disease *sui generis* and that each case has to be studied afresh and in the broadest possible terms, although a few are purely allergic and a few neurotic. Dr. Speer recognizes that there may be widespread symptoms even outside the respiratory tract, but these are 'evidence of systemic allergy'. We close the book hearing a faint echo of the Preacher: 'Allergy, allergy, all is allergy'.

**Technique Chirurgicale Infantile**. By BERNARD DUHAMEL in collaboration with SIMONE SEGAX. (Pp. 354; 289 figures. Fr. fr. 2,800.) Paris: Masson. 1957.

This book makes interesting reading because it is the work of a thoughtful surgeon with an original mind. He gives reasons for his preferred methods, and the

factual statement of his experience and results in several chapters is a welcome feature in this class of book. The work covers abdominal surgery, the neck, harelip and cleft palate but excludes thoracic lesions (except oesophageal atresia and hiatus hernia), neurosurgery (except spina bifida) and orthopaedics.

Some of the methods, however, may seem over-ingenious to the British reader: a technique for combined herniotomy and appendicectomy would seem of very limited value. Readers will also probably desire a larger and more detailed series of results before preferring his operation for Hirschsprung's disease to the well-tryed Swenson type. Bodian is mentioned in the text on several occasions though no specific reference is given. The reviewer feels sure that the opinions attributed to him, e.g., that rectosigmoidectomy should only be considered 'dans les formes graves, rebelles au traitement classique', are quite unlike Bodian's present opinions.

The book will be interesting reading for paediatric surgeons but it could not be recommended as a text for one unfamiliar with the field.

**Aktuelle Problem der Kindertuberkulose.** By H. WISSLER. (Pp. viii + 71; 17 figures. D/M 12.80.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme. 1958.

In this monograph Professor Wissler, late physician-in-chief of the Children's Sanatorium pro Juventute in Davos, Switzerland, discusses current problems of tuberculosis in childhood. Fully aware of the geographical variation in importance of such problems, he nevertheless succeeds in selecting for consideration questions of universal interest. He deals in lucid and precise language with topics ranging from recent advances in bacteriology and epidemiology to the oscillations in B.C.G. policy.

However, the therapeutic aspects of primary tuberculosis, mediastinal and cervical adenitis, tuberculous meningitis, as well as bone and joint tuberculosis, have not been overlooked. The place of the steroids in the treatment of the various clinical manifestations has been critically assessed on the basis of reports available in the literature but also on personal experience.

Each chapter is followed by a short but well-selected bibliography. The x-ray reproductions are generally good and the diagrams clear with the exception of one on page 39 (reproduced from Dubois) comparing mortality from tuberculous meningitis in cases treated with streptomycin alone with those having streptomycin + I.N.H.

The monograph is particularly useful for those who have not had the opportunity or the time to follow the vast literature on childhood tuberculosis but nevertheless have to treat tuberculous children in their day-to-day practice. It provides a succinctly and pleasantly written guide.

**Children Under Five.** By J. W. B. DOUGLAS and J. M. BLOMFIELD. (Pp. 177; 8 figures. 21s.) London: Allen and Unwin. 1958.

In 1946 a joint committee of the Population Investigation Committee and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, wanting information on the maternity services and the cost of childbearing, investigated the circumstances of all confinements that took place in Great Britain during the first week in March of that year, and later published its results. At the end of the investigation there remained available a representative sample of children drawn from all types of homes in the country, and, with a certain amount of luck, the enthusiasm of a small group of workers and the financial help of various interested bodies, this sample has been and is still being followed as it grows up. Periodically during the intervening years a series of papers and monographs have appeared giving the results of various studies in this group. The latest of these, the book under review, embodies the analysis of the answer to a questionnaire sent in 1950 to the parents of a somewhat curtailed remnant of the original group of infants who were by then 4 years old. The questions related to the social class, education of parents, home arrangements and the care of children in the home, growth and illness of the infants, separation from the mother, accidents, broken homes, toilet training and some special information regarding the prematures.

The information is set out, for the most part, in tabular and statistical form, and the conclusions, 75 of them, are usefully summarized in the final chapter.

It is not easy to be sure how valuable all this information is and certainly many of the conclusions will not be news to anyone working with small children. We all agree, for instance, with conclusion no. 7 that 'a large proportion of children shared their beds particularly in Scotland and in both countries many slept either in the same bed or in the same room as their parents'; and it will come at least as useful ammunition to turn to the relevant tables and find that the figure for the 4-year-old children of England and Wales is 26% and for Scotland 51%. Again many of us suspecting that admission to hospital is usually only a minor psychological trauma, will breath a sigh of relief to read that 'a preliminary examination suggested that short periods of separation were not important, and we therefore matched (with controls) only those children who were separated for four weeks or more'. Moreover, though in the latter group there was a higher incidence of nightmares, thumb sucking, nail biting and bed wetting, there did not appear to be greater emotional instability, and this was also true of the 178 children living in homes broken by death, divorce or separation. It should be fascinating to watch the whole survey group as it grows up.