BOOK REVIEWS


These two massive single volume textbooks in the German language epitomize the change that has taken place in medical writing over recent years. Their very titles and use of words emphasize these changes: Einführung in Die Kinderheilkunde versus Paediatric. Dysporta Enterobroncho Pancreatica Congenita Familiaris versus Mucoviscidosis.

Professor Glanzmann’s book is a monument to a lifetime spent in the study of practice in the art of pediatrics and is an erudite tour de force, the like of which we shall surely never see repeated. The basis of this massive book is the lecture demonstration and Professor Glanzmann is at his best with a case to show around which he can build up a picture of the disease being studied.

This approach is old-fashioned as are many of the basic ideas and assumptions. But for anyone not in a hurry, the Professor’s yesteryear outlook, fine didactic teaching, his thumbnail sketches of disease as it was, his delight at the successes achieved by antibiotics and his evident awe at the approach of the steroid age, all join to give the reader an understanding of the art rather than the science of medicine and have a charm and informed delight which takes one back to Osler’s original descriptions or Robert Hutchison’s lectures.

The other is a contemporary collective work, with two editors and thirty-three contributors, giving an authentic up-to-date account of pediatrics with percentile growth charts, diagrams, mille equivalents, standard deviation and all the paraphernalia of a standard book of reference. The field is carefully and intelligibly covered, up to and including hyperelectrolytaemia. For a busy house physician or registrar wanting a quick, reliable answer to an immediate clinical problem or an up-to-date summary of facts with which to impress an impending clinical-pathological conference, this is clearly the book of choice.

Each book is over 1,000 pages long, illustrations are profuse, and both are elegantly produced by Springer-Verlag in almost identical styles. They look fine on the reviewer’s shelf but at £6 each would be expensive to anyone not reading German fluently.


This is a good book. In the first half the authors explain the general problems of deafness in children, causes, possible medical treatment, detection, hearing tests, and all about hearing aids. The other half gives details of the educational treatment of children with moderate impairments and the education of the severely deaf.

The outline of the problems of deaf children equals, or even excels, anything written on the subject in this country. The authors combine the best ideas evolved in the U.S.A. and here. It is rightly emphasized that psychologically there is a difference between a child with five senses and one with four. It is difficult for such a child to keep in touch with his environment and to know it fully.

The effects of deafness of various types is explained with great understanding. The problems centred round a hearing defect are not limited to a faulty hearing equipment. It is a disorder of communication which has far reaching consequences on every aspect of life. The effects on the parents are emphasized. ‘Serious responsibility rests with the physician in interpreting the problems of deafness realistically and hopefully. Referral by him to an appropriate agency in or near the community may be the first step in building hope and assurance for the parents.’

Screening tests in schools are clearly described and practical instructions are given on how to conduct these tests. The fundamental principles of clinical audiology are explained, and the necessity for correct interpretation of audiograms stressed.

There are a few mistakes. For example, the statement that a virus infection, such as rubella, during pregnancy may cause both deafness and cerebral palsy is incorrect. It is stated that ‘the child is not ready for an accurate audiometric test between the age of four to six’. Reliable audiometric tests can be carried out at some centres in this country from the age of 3½.

The book is well set out and easy to read. It seems to be intended primarily for the intelligent parent and teacher, but is free from the usual ‘popular’ approach which so often allows inaccuracies for the sake of simplification. It contains much valuable information which should be very useful to doctors who are or should be interested in the problems of deafness in children.

The IXth International Congress of Paediatrics will take place in Montreal, Canada, from July 19-25, 1959.

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary General, P.O. Box 215 Westmount, Montreal 6, Canada.