BOOK REVIEWS


Metabolic disorders are at present very popular subjects for articles and neurological metabolic abnormalities occupy a very special place in present day literature. One such disease, which is particularly suitable for a monograph, is hepato-lenticular degeneration in which an abnormality of copper metabolism is a feature. Recently, numerous articles have been published on this disorder and it has occupied a well merited prominent place in international neurological meetings. It is therefore a pleasure to be able to review a monograph by two well-known French writers, that will rank in the French language with that written by Hall on the same subject in 1921.

The two authors have seen and recorded their findings in nine cases and have reviewed much of the literature of the subject. After a short historical survey and discussion on general aetiological factors a full and wide discussion of the clinical features is given. A rather undue stress is perhaps laid on the results of the liver disorder in comparison with the neurological features. The anatomical aspects are well recorded, and this is followed by some account of the biochemical disorders. The various modes of therapy available are mentioned with the results obtained in the patients seen. Finally there is a section concerning some personal observations on nine cases of which four had not previously been recorded.

More than 700 references are mentioned, a full bibliography even though not all are references to hepato-lenticular degeneration.

Few mistakes are present, apart from the unfortunate spelling of two names in the preface. An index would have been an advantage together with a slightly more critical approach to the reports of other writers whose clinical acumen is always taken for granted, but these, however, are minor faults.

This volume should be read by all neurologists and those interested in copper metabolism.


In this translation into French of Melanie Klein's classic book The Psycho-analysis of Children, the text, as in the fourth English edition, is unchanged from the original published in 1932. Dr. Boulanger makes it clear that great trouble has been taken to give an accurate presentation, and Mrs. Klein has herself checked the entire translation.

Although Mrs. Klein has added to and extended her observations and theories in a number of later papers and books, the fact that no revision has been necessary in this basic work is a testimony to the accuracy, penetration and fundamental nature of Mrs. Klein's observations and theoretical arguments. This, in turn, is in a large measure due to the fact that everything she says in her books is founded on extensive clinical analytic work with children whose ages ranged from 2½ years to 14 years.

Mrs. Klein describes how she evolved her play technique on the basis of her conviction that play is the child's natural means of expression, just as speech is that of the adult. She provided a play room with table, chairs, couch or sofa, and a basin with running water, plus small toys of varied and primitive kind.

Mrs. Klein points out that 'even a child that is usually inhibited in its play will at least glance at the toys, or touch them, and will so give me a glimpse into its complexive life by the way it begins to play with them or lays them aside, or by its general attitude towards them'.

She makes it clear that her method of analysis of children differs from the psycho-analytic treatment of adults in technique but not in principle. As opposed to certain other analysts, and to most child guidance therapists, Mrs. Klein has studiously avoided all educational measures and relies entirely on interpretation of the material the child presents in his play, his drawings, and his general attitude and behaviour towards the analyst. She thus gained access to the child's unconscious mind, and she has always made his anxieties the centre of her attention.

The first part of the book deals with the varied technique of child analysis at different ages, and contains also chapters on 'Neuroses in children' and 'The sexual activities of children' which paediatricians should find particularly useful. She shows, for example, how neurosis in childhood is not always recognized as such, and may be regarded as excessive naughtiness, or be passed over completely in an unusually 'good' child, and she shows how these characteristics are related to adult difficulties which are more generally recognized as symptoms. She gives criteria for the recognition of severe difficulties, and shows how the common factor of anxiety underlies all the varying manifestations of disorder.

In the second part of her book Mrs. Klein deals in great detail with the effects of early anxiety situations on all aspects of the development of the child, and illustrates her material with extensive clinical examples.


In this book the authors discuss sleep disorders in children under 3 years of age. The subject matter is
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divided into five sections. The first two sections are devoted to a review of the physiology and normal pattern of sleep (including E.E.G. findings). Physical, intellectual and emotional development are summarized in the third section.

In the fourth section, the authors consider the reasons for sleep disturbances at this age based on a clinical study of 72 patients. Illustrative case reports are quoted in support of their findings. They conclude that during the first three months sleep disorders are common and almost always due to one of three causes, hunger, discomfort or maternal over-anxiety. By contrast, sleep disturbances are rarely encountered between 3 and 9 months. After 9 months wakefulness at night is again a matter of frequent concern. At this age the cause is often complex and obscure; teething is rarely an important aetiological factor.

Diagnosis and treatment are considered in the final section. The importance of considering the day-time management when evaluating the cause and treatment is emphasized.

Although sleep disturbances in the very young are a common cause of parental concern, it is a subject which has received little attention. The recorded experience of these authors is a welcome contribution towards a better understanding of this important aspect of child care.


It should be noted that the title of this book from the U.S.A. is Nursing of Children, which implies a more comprehensive approach than the more usual title of 'Sick Children' or 'Children's Diseases'; it is a better title and carries with it expanded thought in line with the progressive outlook in the care, guidance and management of children in sickness and in health. The care of the child in its broadest interpretation calls for an increasing knowledge of the physiology of growth and development and of the mind and its relationships to health and disorder. This book wisely interprets these needs for the nurse and places before her a sensible sequence of ideas, facts and opinions.

The first 200 pages are used for applied physiology and practical care of infants and children. It is notable that there is a good detailed description of breast feeding, a distinct encouragement for those nurses who might, in some places, think that lactation and its maintenance is of relative unimportance. Good descriptions are to be found in the book: 'the care of the well child', 'training and education' and 'prevention of disease' are well thought out chapters. Poisonings and accidents receive very proper emphasis. A section on 'Children in the Home' is followed immediately by 'Children in the Hospital' and there are many sensible remarks on the social aspects, ward arrangements, toys and books and other diversional amenities: strangely enough, there is hardly a line on parents' visiting and the part they might play in the care and treatment of their own child in hospital. Some mention could usefully have been made about liaison with almoners or the domiciliary team.

The nurse as a health educator is given due prominence. Some nursing procedures are well illustrated by clear line drawings, but it is doubtful if tight strapping is really necessary for umbilical hernia. There is good systematic writing on diseases as seen in infancy and childhood and most of the statements are succinct and to the point. Coeliac disease, however, is a notable exception: it is poorly related and indicates nothing of the remarkable story of gluten and the essentials of dietetic treatment. But a few pages further on there is a much more sensible commentary on 'Tonsils and Adenoids'.

The nurse who reads this book will gather a harvest of general and allied information on 'The Convalescent Child', 'Mental Health and Child Guidance', and the values of infant welfare. Physical handicaps are discussed and ways and means of dealing with special groups are included with some special remarks on cerebral palsy. Finally, the tables at the end are very useful and surprisingly contain lists of 'Best Books for Children'. The index is good and the book is well and topically illustrated. A nurse who has really absorbed the sense and science and the spirit and humanity in this volume will not fail to create a favourable impression on the child who is placed under her care.


It has been suggested that a textbook ought properly to be reviewed by one who is intended to learn from it, and this is hardly ever done. Dr. Slobody has written and revised a book which is intended to 'help the student and practitioner focus on the highlights of pediatrics'. In reading it I have tried to put myself in the place of a student approaching paediatrics for the first time, which is not easy.

The book is not a complete work of reference but, on the other hand, it is not a synopsis; it is a fairly concise account of the whole subject including some surgical aspects, and fitting this into 550 moderately small pages has meant oversimplifying and even skimping some parts at the expense of others.

There are no pictures, which saves a great deal of space, but may make the book rather forbidding to the average student at first sight; nor are there references or bibliography, but at the end of each chapter there is a page or two of questions by which the reader may test his newly gained knowledge.

The chapter on growth and development of the normal child is particularly good and this is something one does not find well written in most paediatric textbooks of the size. Breast feeding, though encouraged, is dealt with in a mere two pages. In the short chapter on psychological problems I would have liked more emphasis on the sort of things which lead to these problems (e.g. long separation of mother and child) rather than the usual division into sections on tics, masturbation, enuresis and the like. Incidentally enuresis, which takes up so much of the paediatrician's time, is granted only half a page. Fluid and electrolyte balance is dealt with at length