BOOK REVIEWS

Helping Your Child to Get Well. Ed. LEN CHALONER.
By SIMON YUDKIN, J. LANGRIDGE, PHYLLIS WOOLRICH and LEN CHALONER. (Pp. 142; 31 figs. 16s.) London: Allen & Unwin. 1959.

This book is full of sound common sense. It is not intended to be a family doctor but information on some diseases is given for which the child would be nured at home. It is in three parts. The first deals with observation and the nursing of sick children at home. It is written in such a way that it makes for a good patient-doctor relationship. The second part gives good advice on providing interests for children of all ages who are confined to bed. The suggestions are useful and inexpensive. The third part discusses the problems arising when a child has to go into hospital. The book can be highly recommended but it seems a pity that the price is so high.


Although the preface states that this book 'is not primarily a medical text' but is designed for 'a more general public', there is much in it to profit family doctors, school doctors and paediatricians.

The main part of the book is composed of 15 chapters contributed by individual experts on all the usually accepted childhood handicaps, poliomyelitis, cerebral palsy, visual defects, speech and hearing defects, muscular dystrophy, mongolism, as well as some of the less common handicaps such as familial dysautonomia and amputations.

Each of these chapters is a clearly written guide to the background and clinical definition of a specific handicap. The effects of the handicap are explained and treatment as well as general management of the child are detailed. Special note is made of the various agencies concerned in medical and surgical care, physiotherapy, schooling, occupational training and guidance in choosing a career.

Five of the chapters are illustrated and most contain references to recent work, especially to recent articles in paediatric literature.

The first five chapters are separate essays, defining the part played by the members of 'The Team' in the management of the disabled child. The points of view of the parent, the physician, the psychiatrist, the teacher, and the social worker are given equal prominence.

A chapter on the Role of Adoption Agencies is somewhat unexpected in a book of this sort, but makes clear the readiness of would-be adopting parents in the United States to accept children with a variety of handicaps.

The following chapter on Heredity Counselling gives examples of family situations in which such discussion had been very important.

The final chapters are a series of short guides. Besides lists of play, reading and education materials, they include in 'Guides for Discipline' and 'Guides for Parents' two short, thoughtful essays on the general management of any disabled child.

Although the book has 27 contributors, the Editor has been successful in obtaining a high level of clarity in the descriptions of the various disabilities, of modern methods of management, and of the many agencies involved.

Whilst some of the chapters are directed chiefly to the parents of handicapped children, much of the clinical detail would seem, to a reviewer working in the British Isles, to be far beyond the requirements of the average parent. The book's principal value lies in its wide view of the whole field of handicapped children and its very clear presentation of the details of so many disabilities. It should be read by all who have any part in the clinical, educational or administrative care of any child with a handicap.

Diagnosis of Congenital Heart Disease, 2nd ed. By SWEN R. KJELLBERG, EDGAR MANNHEIMER, Ulf RUDKE and BENGT JONSSON. (Pp. xiv + 866; 727 figs. $28.00) Chicago: The Year Book Publishers, Inc. 1959.

The second edition of this important diagnostic manual of congenital heart disease closely follows the pattern of the first and is based on a detailed analysis of material seen at the Karolinska Hospital in Stockholm, now swollen to 742 cases. It is enlarged by four chapters, contains many amplifications and corrections as well as an increased number of illustrations.

In the 30 different abnormalities studied, six contain between 60 and 140 examples of each and between them comprise 80% of the total. They are patent ductus arteriosus, ventricular septal defect, coarctation, pulmonary stenosis, auricular septal defect and Fallot's tetralogy, in that order of frequency.

The first few chapters are devoted to the embryology of the heart, X-ray anatomy, techniques and to a brief summary of material to be studied. Thereafter each condition is taken in turn and the chapters follow each other in a repetitive pattern of clinical features and E.G.G., X-ray, electrokymography, cardiac catheterization, haemodynamics during exercise and angiocardiography. This list may be abbreviated for a few uncommon conditions but the arrangement never alters. Each condition is illustrated with a profusion of photographs, diagrams, tracings and charts. At the end of the
book there is a list of over 700 references with titles in full and an index which, though short, appears to function efficiently.

To the reviewer, an English-style consulting paediatrician without special cardiac training, of average intelligence but perhaps with difficulties regarding spatial relationships, this book is a revelation and has led to a revolution in the understanding of congenital cardiac disease. Every page and illustration bears evidence of imaginative effort spent in clarifying and elucidating problems relating to the action and haemodynamics of the heart working under abnormal conditions, and step by step each investigation is made to yield up its logical contribution to diagnosis. An important contributory factor to the character of this book is the impeccably simple and consequently lucid English in which it is written, which must reflect on both the original Swedish and on the translation.

The book sticks precisely to its terms of reference and diagnosis never spills over into prognosis, nor is there ever a hint that the subtle exposition of morbid anatomy, physiology and haemodynamics might have a bearing on treatment. But perhaps it would be greedy to ask for more: it is a fine book to have to refer to frequently.


In September, 1956, at the invitation of Professor R. Debré a conference was held at the International Children’s Centre in Paris under the chairmanship of Dr. David Rutstein.

Experts from all over the world assembled to discuss the epidemiology and prevention of rheumatic fever. This record of the proceedings is arranged in sections, each of which is introduced by an acknowledged authority (R. Wahl, P. Hedlund, M. McCarty, E. G. L. Bywaters, M. Finland, P. Mozcionacci and Mlle J. Labesse), and each is followed by a series of short communications and a general discussion. Among a large number of distinguished delegates Bruce Perry, R. E. O. Williams and R. Cruckshank represented Great Britain.

This account contains a cross section of international opinion regarding the bacteriology and immunology of Group A haemolytic streptococci, including practical information about the isolation and recognition of these organisms and their antibodies. This is followed by a discussion of the epidemiology of streptococcal infections and their relationship to the development of rheumatic fever in certain individuals. This leads naturally to consideration of methods of preventing rheumatic fever.

After an interesting discussion by Finland on changes in the resistance of bacteria to antibiotics since 1949, a number of important points were raised. For example, although sulphonamides are suitable for prophylaxis of rheumatic fever since they are not bactericidal, they are quite unsuitable for treatment of streptococcal infections or for the prevention of first attacks. Penicillin is the most effective available agent, both for prevention and control of streptococcal infection. Unfortunately half the attacks of rheumatic fever occur without any obvious sore throat and the diagnosis of rheumatic fever is still largely a matter of clinical judgment and application of the criteria laid down by Duckett Jones.

The proceedings of the Conference have been translated and edited by Professor R. Cruckshank and Dr. A. A. Glynn, who are successful in producing a readable and well balanced book.

The Artificial Feeding of Normal Infants. By William Emdin. (Pp. 113; 3 figs. 16s.) Howard Timmins. 1959.

It is not very long since the artificial feeding of infants was considered an exact science and books on the subject were bulky and their formulae complicated. As a result few students made any serious attempt to understand the problem and many practitioners have been content to leave it to their nursing associates or advised mothers to follow the instructions on the tin.

Since then the subject has been simplified and it is realized that most babies are very tolerant and will survive on almost anything approaching a normal feed. There can be no scientific exactitude in a subject where measurements are in teaspoons which from house to house vary in size and in how well they are filled.

A new difficulty has arisen, however, in the multiplicity of preparations now available for infant feeding and this book sets out to present 'a simple, practical feeding scheme applicable to feeding with natural cows’ milk and all types of the proprietary milk products in common use'. In this it succeeds admirably and the principles laid down are those generally recognized by paediatricians as the most satisfactory.

The book is divided into three parts. The first considers artificial feeding in general, the second describes the use of the different preparations available, and the last is an up to date discussion on mixed feeding and the use of dietary supplements. The subject matter is clearly and simply presented and there are numerous valuable tables making for easy reference.

This is a most satisfactory book and one which I have no hesitation in recommending to students, nurses and practitioners.


Although half the world’s children live in the tropics and sub-tropics, the study of disease problems among them has been slow to gather momentum. Now, however, things are changing, and tropical paediatrics is becoming recognized as a subject worthy of world-wide study. Courses are being held, chairs established, a journal is now flourishing, and finally the text-books have appeared.

This is the second book to have been published within the last two years, with two distinguished editors and 55