

BOOK REVIEWS

Growing Up in Newcastle upon Tyne: a continuing study of health and illness in young children within their families. By F. J. W. MILLER, S. D. M. COURT, W. S. WALTON and E. G. KNOX. (Pp. 369; illustrated. 25s.) Published for the Nuffield Foundation by the Oxford University Press. 1960.

The Newcastle study was initiated in 1947 by Sir James Spence and his co-workers of the Nuffield Department of Child Health at King's College and the City Health Department with the object of providing a record of the incidence and type of illness occurring in childhood evaluated against a fully studied family and environmental background. It is offered as 'a contribution towards understanding the needs of the family in sickness and in health' as a means of preventing childhood disturbances and illnesses with their associated morbidity and mortality. The study emphasizes throughout the child as an integral part of his family and environment.

The first volume, 'A Thousand Families in Newcastle upon Tyne',* deals with the first year of life of the children in the sample. The new volume is a continuation of this work and presents the progress of 847 of the children from the same thousand family sample during the first five years of life between 1947 and 1952. The book describes the varying social and economic fortunes of the family seen against a background of life in the city and gives a general picture of the patterns of illnesses and deaths during the five years. These are subsequently described in detail and related to various aspects of the child's environment which have been fully considered in terms of housing, family and medical care. The importance of this approach can be seen in the conclusion that 'in infancy, at least, social factors largely determine whether a given infection will develop as a cold, bronchitis or pneumonia'. The significance of the family in the epidemiology of childhood illness is beautifully demonstrated in the family studies of entrenched staphylococcal and streptococcal infections. The analyses of recorded facts are well laid out in the Appendices and a short glossary of medical and local terms is provided. There are some excellent photographs which add to the clear descriptive pictures.

The value of the book lies not only in its clear presentation of the natural history of childhood disease fully evaluated against its environmental and epidemiological background, but in its record of contemporary social life. The care and consideration with which the families have been treated in order to obtain these facts are evident throughout the book and are stressed by the attitude 'We hope that during these years we have been sufficiently sensitive to the privileges we have been so generously

given' and also by the degree of cooperation from the families with only seven withdrawals from the survey during the five years. The high incidence of disturbance in the human environment, with 53% of the children having at least one adverse factor in deprivation, deficiency and dependence, and 8.3% of children whose families are deeply involved in all three factors, stresses the real need for family guidance, especially in the sphere of personal relationships. Education of parents with regard to the recognition of illness and the avoidance of contact with cases requires greater attention than has been previously given in order to reduce further illness and morbidity in children. The important role of family doctor emerges in its true light and the need for improved medical education in order to enable him to fulfil this role adequately is made apparent.

It is hoped that as the study advances greater attention might be paid to the physical growth of these children; a few simple measurements accurately taken by health visitors at regular and more frequent intervals would provide a unique opportunity for longitudinal growth study in so large and representative a sample of children whose background and development is intimately known.

This book is strongly recommended to all those concerned with family health, in particular, medical students, family doctors, health visitors and sociologists and to any who seek an outstanding study to provide a model for any similar work.

Brucellosis in England. By HUGH R. E. WALLIS. (Pp. 140; 9 figs; Index. 25s.) London: A. S. O'Connor & Co. Ltd.

Dr. Harold J. Harris states in the preface to this book, 'The case histories given so vividly but with such admirable conservation of verbiage (which indeed pertains throughout the book) serve to call attention to the manifold symptomatology of brucellosis . . .'; unfortunately the greatest fault of this book is its failure to present concise and exact data and observations. Dr. Wallis quotes extensively from the classic paper of Barrett and Rickards but the evidence he presents is not as convincing as was theirs. One of the most interesting sections is the brief historical review.

There are several errors which point to poor editing, which is surprising in a monograph which is obviously a labour of love. It is irritating to find 'see Table 1 on pages 30-31' when Table 1 is on pages 88-89; or to read 'the urine may show a few to many leukocytes'; or that a very good positive skin reaction 'remained for a week and the centre became almost neurotic'. Percentages are often given to the second decimal place but as the thesis is mainly developed on the data from 35 cases, this is hardly justified; it would appear that Dr. Wallis might have been bewitched by his own figures as when he

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