

## 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

\* Published for the Nuffield Foundation and the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, 1954, 10s. 6d.

refers to the examination of 17 specimens of sera, obtained after skin tests had been performed, and he found that '14 (82.35%) showed a significant rise in titre'.

It is stated that blood culture is rarely positive, but it is surprising that there is no mention of a blood culture being performed on Case 4, which was diagnosed early in the disease when the titre of agglutinins was high; the reviewer has always found that such a case has given positive blood cultures.

However, this book emphasizes the importance of excluding a diagnosis of chronic brucellosis in patients who have 'rheumatic' symptoms and it is valuable also because it restates the value of brucellin skin tests when these are combined with serial agglutination reactions; the author also demonstrates the danger inherent in unpasteurized milk.

**The Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Sick Children, 1860-1960.** By DOUGLAS GUTHRIE with various contributors. (Pp. 75+xii; illustrated. 17s. 6d.) Edinburgh and London: E. and S. Livingstone Ltd. 1960.

The Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Sick Children celebrates its Centenary this year, a fact which will be acclaimed by many outside the intimate circle of those privileged to speak affectionately of the 'Sick Kids'.

The story of this famous hospital is an epic which compels the telling as the first hundredth milestone passes. We must all be grateful to Dr. Douglas Guthrie for his undertaking and congratulate him warmly upon his achievement. He has given us a delightful little book which is assured of world-wide interest.

The author has been assisted by seven other distinguished contributors. This could have been a problem, but any risk of scrappiness or repetition has been skilfully avoided. History unfolds smoothly, crucial episodes and vital personalities are admirably high-lighted, and the result is a most readable record of great historical value. From its birth, a hundred years ago, the Hospital has grown gloriously in the setting of the Edinburgh School of Medicine of which it must always be an essential bulwark. Today state control brings a new challenge, as Professor Ellis indicates in his wise assessment of the future. There are many in the hospital world outside Edinburgh who chafe under the torpor of bureaucracy and pray for a renaissance in high places of the courageous vision which inspired the Voluntary Hospital System. Wherever re-education may be necessary, Dr. Guthrie's book affords a timely stimulus.

**Maternal Disorders related to Fetal Stress, Perinatal Death and Congenital Defects.** Selected References 1952-58. (Pp. v+33.) Bethesda, Md.: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. Copies available from the Library, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda 14, Maryland, U.S.A.

This list of references is concerned with those maternal disorders which bear on the foetus and the perinatal period and which cause congenital defects. There are some 413 of them but as the articles included are all in the English language, the publication is of rather doubtful value.

**Der Liquor Cerebrospinalis in Kindesalter.** By H. SCHÖNENBERG. (Pp. viii+175; 43 figs. DM. 29. Stuttgart: G. Thieme. 1960.

This is the first comprehensive monograph on the cerebrospinal fluid written by a paediatrician for paediatricians. It is divided into two parts—the first giving the *general* data of physiology and pathology whilst the second contains a full account of the fluid findings in *each disease*. In both parts the presentation of detail and the discussion of the theoretical aspects are well balanced. The main subjects of part one include barriers, testing for permeability, technique of specimen taking, pressure, cells, proteins, electrophoresis, colloid reactions, sugar, sodium chloride, lipins, lactic acid, amino-acids, physico-chemical properties, enzymes, vitamins, immunology, the normal, subnormal and pathological liquor in general and the liquor syndromes (meningitis, encephalitis). The second part is devoted to a description of the fluid changes integrated with the pathology of all known central nervous diseases of childhood including Listeria infection, actinomycosis, leptospirosis, mycoses, toxoplasmosis, foreign body meningitis and viral encephalomyelitis (down to cat-scratch disease).

The author draws from personal experience, and his presentation of the possibilities and limitations of liquor diagnosis is critical. A list of references running to 13 pages concludes the book. It will be welcome to paediatricians and clinical pathologists.

**X-ray Diagnosis of the Alimentary Tract in Infants and Children.** By EDWARD B. SINGLETON. (Pp. 352. 83s.; 11.00\$.) London: Interscience Publishers Ltd. Chicago: Year Book Publishers Inc. 1959.

This is by far the most realistic and comprehensive book on the radiology of the gastro-intestinal tract in children that has yet been published. It is very readable and approaches the subject from the viewpoint of a logical application of radiographic techniques to the problems of children's disease. This is perhaps the chief value of the book. The clinical background, including the developmental, anatomical and physiological factors involved in each problem, is first excellently surveyed. The position of radiology in each case is then given in detail, and the radiological contribution discussed in an unusually able manner against the clinical background. At the end of each section there is a list of references, and the titles and subtitles are clear and numerous.

The illustrations are of the same high quality as the text and excel those found in most textbooks of radiology by concentrating on the problem at issue. They are unusually effective, and there are plenty of them.

This work can be recommended without reservation and will be found of the utmost value to both clinicians and radiologists. It should go far to clear up a lot of the uncertainty that still prevails as to the role radiology plays in the diagnosis of alimentary disease in the young. The author is to be congratulated.