papers on electroencephalography, which together scarcely cover four pages. Paediatricians will be particularly interested in the account of the recently described syndrome of ataxia-telangiectasia by Elena Boder who first focused attention on this condition.

Like many reports of symposia, this volume has the merit of novelty but the defect of inconsistency. There is much to stimulate and interest the specialist and the general reader, but the quality and presentation of the papers is uneven and there is a dearth of the discussion which should be the main justification for such a publication. One cannot help wondering whether the same authors invited to contribute chapters to a planned book on the subject could not have achieved a more balanced and complete survey without sacrificing any of its freshness or appeal. Nevertheless, this is a book which must be read by those with special interest in the subject and will repay browsing by others less conversant with this branch of neurology.


This Year Book has now nearly 500 pages of abstracts of many of the best papers on paediatrics published in 1961 and 1962. As usual, a number of papers have been selected for comment and occasional clarification, or even expansion, by either the Editor or other informed commentators. Although, naturally, the majority of papers are American, it is good to see that more than one-third of the papers are non-American, and this spread of reading to give a better coverage of the world literature on paediatrics will be much appreciated everywhere.

As usual, the book is beautifully produced, and as much a credit as ever to the Editor and the Year Book Medical Publishers.


This handy little book contains a wealth of useful information in a concise and easily assimilable form. It covers virtually every practical problem one is likely to meet in paediatrics.

The first chapters deal with the special points relating to paediatric history-taking, normal growth and development, infant feeding and nutrition. Clinical investigations, taking each system in turn, are dealt with in subsequent chapters. Indication for the various tests as well as methods of collecting samples and brief outlines of pathological techniques are described. There are many tables of normal values which are very clearly set out. These should prove especially helpful. Perhaps the most valuable part of the book for the house physician is detailed description of common procedures, such as taking blood samples from various sites and intravenous therapy. Commonly encountered difficulties, e.g. how to, and when not to, restart the drip that has stopped, are discussed. Another chapter deals with electrolyte replacement and the management of paediatric emergencies, such as diabetic coma and adrenal cortical insufficiency. The instructions are clearly set out and precise. The fact that they are perforce dogmatic is, if anything, an advantage for a book of this size and scope. The section dealing with antibiotics is up to date and comprehensive and the section dealing with poisoning invaluable for the casualty department. The excellent index helps one to find the desired information quickly.

This book will certainly prove to be an invaluable reference manual for the busy paediatrician, registrar and house physician.


The publication of a new textbook on paediatric surgery is of considerable interest and emphasizes the increasing acceptance of the fact that surgery of children and particularly the surgery of the newborn presents special problems. The size of this book, over 1,200 pages in two volumes, and the table of contents is evidence of the scope of the specialty, and throughout the book there is ample indication that the best results in neonatal surgery particularly can only be obtained in specialist hospitals, where paediatric radiologists, anaesthetists, pathologists and surgeons can work in close association with paediatricians and with nurses expert in the care of the sick newborn baby.

This new textbook of paediatric surgery has five editors and over 70 contributors. An attempt was made to maintain uniformity amongst the large number of contributors by the distribution of a model chapter, but there is no doubt that in reading the book it was a pleasant relief to come upon chapters written by those who did not abide too closely by the rules. Contributors on the whole have expressed personal opinions, some are better than others at commenting on the work of others, and this is a point where one feels five editors had the opportunity of reviewing various methods of treatment and giving an unbiased opinion. It is a pity that some of the more senior paediatric surgeons in the United States are not contributors. The specialized sections on ophthalmology, otolaryngology, orthopaedics and neurosurgery were deliberately restricted in size; the section on orthopaedics is so short in relation to the size of the subject that it might have been better omitted altogether, especially since there are no references in this section.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the publication is that there was rather less than two years from conception to delivery. This is a highly creditable performance,
but even in this short time some recent advances have been missed; for instance, chromosome abnormalities are mentioned once only in connexion with cleft lip and palate; and while there is no doubt that the results of the Swenson type of recto-sigmoidectomy for Hirschsprung’s disease are very good, the Duhamel operation gets but a superficial mention and a rather inaccurate description. No reference at all could be found to a few rare conditions, such as foetal ascites, chylous ascites and nasal glioma.

It is easy for a reviewer to be destructive. In fact this is an excellent textbook with clear descriptions of embryological processes and physiological changes. The sections on the embryology of the heart and great vessels and on cardio-pulmonary physiology are of particular value.

The bibliography is extensive and the book should be of value to both surgeon and paediatrician. The presentation is excellent, illustrations both line and half-tone being of high quality, and very few printing errors were found. A work of this size and quality is an expensive production, but for the paediatric production, of high quality, and present physicians and also the paediatrician it will be a very valuable reference.

Le Mégacôlon Congénital: Diagnostic et Traitemet. 

Professor Roviralta and his colleagues have produced an informative and up-to-date book and have succeeded in their aim to set out the current views on congenital megaloclon and allied conditions. The diagnosis and management at different ages are fully discussed with emphasis on the value of the retrorectal and transanal procedure (Duhamel operation) in the first few months of life.

The historical notes are of interest and chapters on radiology and biopsy are useful and well illustrated. The chapter entitled ‘Considerations diverses’ is good; therein the familial and psychic aspects of the disease and the clinico-pathological variations of megaloclon and mega-rectum are described; in addition the complications and results after operation are given.

The lengthy bibliography, containing nearly 350 references, indicates the wide scope of this review. The opinions of numerous authorities overshadow the authors’ experience and give the book an impersonal approach. Nevertheless, the writers present all aspects of this complex disease in a simple manner, and both paediatric physicians and surgeons will find this book from Barcelona full of helpful information.


The first edition of this book was published in 1945. Revisions have been thorough and the present fifth edition in 17 years maintains the excellence one has come to expect in this standard work. Primarily written for speech therapists, it is of value to many others interested in the management of children with cleft palate including surgeons, paediatricians, and clinic and school medical officers. The entire subject is concisely covered from a historical survey of treatment of the cleft to a practical account of the scope of speech therapy. Therapy is considered in relation to the whole management of the patient in proper perspective and in a factual down-to-earth manner. The management of clefts has progressed far since the first edition appeared and to quote from the Preface to this fifth edition ‘speech therapy is changing from a hopeless struggle against insuperable odds to achieve speech, which was at least intelligible, to that of post-operative observation and assessment of speech which is developing gradually but surely towards the normal’. Miss Morley deserves our gratitude for keeping this admirable book up to date.


‘Someone must defend the child against the system’, quotes a paediatrician in the foreword, and the author of this small book describes how an effective defence has been organized in a general hospital in America. In most American hospitals, as in Britain where paediatricians are among the pioneers in this field, the defences tend to be more haphazard, more dependent on the individual doctor’s interest. Mrs. Plank, who was trained as a teacher and later studied under Maria Montessori and Anna Freud, presents a programme of ‘child care’ which proved so successful that it has become integrated in the day-to-day work of a hospital paediatric department. It is based on the ‘child care worker’, an active member of the ‘clinical team’, who is specially trained to combine the functions of ‘play lady’, comforter, explainer and teacher for children in hospital.

To minimize distortion of the child’s normal pattern of living and development, which may be caused by the combination of illness and separation from the family, hospital care should not be restricted to the too narrow function of curing diseases. Accepting this basic assumption, as most paediatricians have come to do nowadays, the author provides a simple and practical description of a system for the co-ordinated management of children in hospital. Chapters on preparing the child for coming into hospital and for operation, on death in the ward, on play, on activities and on learning are followed by a ‘child life and education programme’ which deals in turn with out-patient clinics, in-patient wards, long-term convalescent wards, rehabilitation and acute infectious wards. Appendices are added with details of crafts, equipment and information to parents, which will be usefully compared with hospital practice here.

I should hesitate to adopt the implications of the last