BOOK REVIEWS

pathology is illustrated with photomicrographs of the highest quality, and such a complete description must be almost unique in the world literature.

The author then describes his operative treatment of the condition. This consists of curettage of the epiphysis through a lateral approach similar to that employed in nailing operations. He quotes seven cases to show the effect of this procedure in producing early fusion across the epiphysial plate.

This operation is not one that has been adopted generally and one feels that a rather larger series of successful cases would be necessary before it could be recommended.

There is a chapter containing a review of current knowledge and opinion about this condition, and a very full bibliography.


More and more laboratory manuals of micro- and ultramicrotechniques in clinical chemistry are being published in response, as the editors write, to 'an ever-growing demand by pediatricians for these techniques in general hospitals'. Although probably the earliest one was published in the U.K., since then most have come from the United States where micro-procedures appear to have achieved a measure of acceptance not, so far, attained in hospital laboratories here, outside those of children's hospitals.

The editors of this book have succeeded in compiling an excellent compendium of methods, all in current use in the Children's Hospital in Denver. Originally intended for the residents and technicians of that institute, it is now offered to a wider public. A wide range of estimations of clinical interest to paediatricians is included, not only those commonly asked for, but many which are more rarely demanded. Hospital laboratories in the United States are, presumably, more liberally supplied with apparatus than those in this country, since estimations, e.g. osmotic pressure of plasma and urine, are given, which require expensive apparatus limited to only one procedure. Each method is clearly and precisely set down in numbered steps, making it simple to follow, and each is accompanied by brief notes of its clinical value and technical difficulties as well as the normal values. This last is especially useful, particularly for those not accustomed to evaluating the results in the young infant, and misleading interpretations may be given if it is not realized that normal levels can vary considerably according to age and birth weight, especially during the first weeks and months of life.

Within its scope, as defined by its authors, this text is a valuable one and can be recommended for the reliable and up-to-date methods included. However, alternative procedures are rarely given and references to the literature are relatively scanty. A few omissions may be noted: no method for the estimation of total lipids in serum or of oxalate in urine is given, and the estimation of uric acid in urine is described but not listed in the table of contents. Possible errors due to haemolysed specimens of blood seem to be nowhere discussed, although the method of collection of the capillary blood sample is given its proper importance.

Some may object to paper covers and the large format in a book intended for use in the laboratory, but the size and large print make it easy to consult on the bench.


Dr. Levin has succeeded in producing a collection of essays on infant feeding with an angle of approach quite different from that usually adopted by textbooks on the subject. His main aim is to show that today's practices are grounded in yesterday's prejudices. Evidence for this has been gleaned from a wide variety of sources ranging from Biblical quotations to Webster's Dictionary, together with numerous excerpts and ideas from writers down the centuries but, curiously, without any references or acknowledgements to them. In general he has ably developed his theme in a series of 14 essays on various aspects of the subject. The first, on breast-feeding, has interesting comments on the similarity between the placenta and the breast and also relates some of the folklore that surrounds the subject. Later essays deal with breast milk (its composition and limitations), wet nurses, bottles and teats, milk formulas (in which the author cannot resist giving details of his own!), stool gazing, weaning, wind and allied matters. While fully appreciative of the influence of the past, the author does not seem to have grasped the full significance of the chronology of historical events. Briefly, if bacteriology had been invented before the biochemical analysis of milk, instead of about one hundred years later, then the 'weak digestion' from which babies are reputed to suffer would have been rightly attributed to infections from contaminated milk rather than an inability to deal with fat, protein and carbohydrate that some still believe to be the case. Indeed, if they did not, there would then be no justification for writing a book such as this at all. Apart from this omission his handling of the subject is very competent though his style often gives the impression of hurried compilation and is sometimes frankly indigestible as when, on the first page, the phrase 'quadrupedal movement' is used to mean crawling. When complaining about the complex mathematical calculations once used in infant feeding (p. 63) he refers to 'not so simple arithmetic', but whether this is a printer's error or a rather subtle pun the reviewer has been unable to decide. There are also inevitable inaccuracies such as the incidence of breast feeding in Britain at 3 months being under 20% (p. 16), and the weight of a yearling calf being 100 lb. (p. 28). The quality of the paper and reproduction is high, as also is the price. Anyone interested in the subject cannot fail to find something to enjoy in this book.