BOOK REVIEWS

pathology of the human disease. There is also some useful electrophysiological information about various muscle disorders other than muscular dystrophy from Buchthal and Rosenfalk. The most important recent advances in our knowledge of the disease have come from biochemists, notably Schapira and Dreyfus who contribute to this volume. Serum enzyme levels have been shown to be high in patients and their relatives, and this provides the most specific diagnostic criterion. The muscle itself shows many abnormal chemical findings both in man and in the mouse, and a great deal of comparative data have been produced. It is perhaps disappointing amid this wealth of material that all the findings could simply be the result of the disease! the primary cause eludes us completely.

However, this volume contains most of the information that was available about the disease at the time when it went to press, and there is a valuable collection of references.


The excitement stimulated by the title is sustained throughout the text. As the authors point out knowledge of enzyme functions, molecular disturbances and genetic influences has increased enormously since the appearance of the first edition eight years ago. This second edition has been brought up to date in the literal sense of the word, and in admirably lucid, logical terms deals with the place and practical value of appropriately selected biochemical investigations in paediatric practice. Perspective is preserved throughout. Arbitrary opinions are supported by reasoned argument. Caution is adjured in the interpretation of results of a number of tests, and where conflicting views still prevail the authors express their own considered opinion based on wide and rich experience.

The text is divided into three major sections. Of these the first deals in detail with methods of investigation; the second explains the value of technical procedures in study of the functions of organs, tissues and body fluids; and the third is concerned with the organized, logical application of biochemical studies in the investigation of clinical syndromes. Inevitably paediatric interests dealt with are varied and vast. Subjects dealt with include mineral and fluid balance; calcium and phosphorus metabolism; carbohydrate metabolism; renal, hepatic and alimentary function; and hormonal secretions. Subsections are devoted to blood groups, coagulation and haemolysis; and to respiratory exchange considered in relation to pulmonary and cardiac function.

In general presentation of each subject in all three sections consists of, in succession—an outline of the physiological principles involved, a precise description of techniques, and an explanation of results to be expected in healthy and unhealthy subjects. In an altogether outstanding volume your reviewer was especially impressed by the carefully developed, unprejudiced argu-

ments incorporated in discussions of individual clinical conditions. The discussions touch on the evolution of biochemical studies and clinical opinions, integrate the differing and changing views of biochemical pathologists and children’s physicians, and recognize the persistence of many biochemical and clinical uncertainties.

The plan and format facilitate easy reading of a massive amount of valuable research and experience. Overlapping sections are minimized by judicious use of cross-references. Each subsection has an admirably comprehensive and up-to-date list of references to the literature of many countries, including that of the United Kingdom. Tables and illustrations make positive contributions to the value of the text, and there is an excellent index.

The book possesses great value as a work of reference for both clinicians and laboratory workers. It can be relied upon to disturb the conscience of the reactionary, and to stimulate a spirit of excited inquiry in the most slothful. For the impetuous and overzealous there is good advice in the introduction to this edition:

‘Il faut toujours penser que la répétition des prêlevenements est à la fois douloureuse et spoliative. Médecins et biologistes doivent donc rester maîtres de leur curiosité et se limiter à ce qui est utile’.


In 1922 Dr. Edith Lincoln began a planned clinical and pathological study of tuberculous children drawn from the unrivalled material of the Bellevue Hospital, New York City. By 1949, 964 children with recent primary tuberculous infection had been enrolled and have now been followed up almost into adult life. None of these children had received antibiotic treatment and they form the basis for a study of the natural history, cause, and prognosis of primary tuberculosis. This unique group of cases, together with several others with tuberculosis of bones, kidneys, skin and elsewhere, in all some 2,500 cases, is the material used by Dr. Lincoln and Dr. Sewell for writing this most unique, comprehensive and attractive book about which it is difficult to find sufficient expressions of praise. Professor Arvid Wallgren, in his foreword, calls it ‘a remarkable, exhaustive, up-to-date and beautiful book which contains everything worth knowing about childhood tuberculosis’. What perhaps makes this book so unique and valuable is that the material which the authors have so patiently collected and so exhaustively studied is used throughout the text to substantiate their very precise statements, but never to batter or overwhelm the reader with facts and figures and tables. It is written in a style that is at the same time completely authoritative and yet both lucid and simple.

The main bulk of the book is concerned with recent childhood infection, its pathology, diagnosis, cause and treatment, as well as its long-term results in relation to adult infection, both with and without antibiotic treatment. There are also chapters on chronic pulmonary
tuberculosis as well as infection of other organisms in the chest, neck and abdomen. There is a final chapter on the prevention and eradication of tuberculosis in childhood. For the record, and as a challenge which English paediatricians and Health Authorities might well note, the authors say that ‘the periodic tuberculin test should be an integral part of any programme for the prevention of contagious diseases in childhood. An infant who receives immunization against smallpox, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and poliomyelitis, should also have a tuberculin test twice a year, and tests should be part of the annual examination of the older child . . . The tuberculin test as a diagnostic aid and drug therapy to prevent progressive disease are the most important tools in the battle to make tuberculosis infection and disease in children as rare as smallpox . . .’


This paper-back monograph, dealing with the basis, practice, statistics and legal aspects of vaccination and immunization procedures, was published under the aegis of the German Green Cross, a voluntary organization for the popularization of preventive medicine.

Thirteen contributors make it into a comprehensive review of the subject aimed specifically at the German general practitioner and the medical officer in the Public Health Service. As far as the reader outside Germany is concerned its preoccupation with local conditions constitutes a major weakness of the book, although two small chapters are devoted to immunization programmes in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The lengthy discussion of legal questions is of interest only to the medical public within the confines of that country.

The chapters dealing with the subject matter of immunization are up to date and clearly set out. However, references at the end of the book are extremely scanty and inadequate, though the reader is offered in a few accompanying sentences the titles of three monographs on immunization, which contain an extensive review of the relevant literature.

To those expecting strict discipline in the health services, the great variation in the number of the immunized among the population of different areas of West Germany will come as a great surprise. These figures were compiled from questionnaires returned by 400 Medical Officers of Health.

It is interesting to note that in ‘central’ (East) Germany in addition to smallpox vaccination, immunization against poliomyelitis, diphtheria and tetanus has become compulsory since January 1961; while pertussis and B.C.G. immunization remain voluntary. However, parents who refuse B.C.G. vaccination for their children have to express their objection in writing.

The official immunization time-table provides for the administration of B.C.G. in the first week of life, poliomyelitis vaccine in the third, fourth and fifth months, triple antigen in the sixth and seventh months and primary smallpox vaccination in the eighth month.

In West Germany where only smallpox vaccination is legally enforced, two schedules are currently being followed, one according to Kleinschmidt including the use of triple antigen and one of Hellbrugge incorporating the quadruple vaccine, containing antigens of polio, diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis.

The dangers of whooping-cough immunization are not regarded as serious or frequent enough to warrant special consideration, or to make the procedure questionable.

Useful to the German reader is a special chapter dealing with all kinds of vaccination certificates, private, official, national as well as international, and another supplying information for the traveller abroad. It gives addresses of the various institutes at which yellow-fever vaccine, cholera, plague and typhus vaccine can be obtained.

A remarkable feature of the book is an appendix on the psychological conditions and suppositions essential for a successful campaign in health education. It has the tone, terseness, categorical style and persuasiveness of modern advertising. The following sentence on page 212 may illustrate the point—‘pedants, choleric, schizoids, fanatics and hypochondriacs are unfit for health education.’

On the whole this manual offers helpful and reliable guidance in matters of immunization to those who require it within the borders of Germany and, in a rather limited way, outside it.


This book, first published in 1957 and now in its third edition, contains a wealth of useful information, especially for residents and registrars in paediatric units.

The chapters cover the wide field of paediatric treatment, not only that of emergencies. It is lavishly illustrated, making all techniques easily understandable. The chapters of emergencies in the newborn and poisoning were particularly interesting and valuable. There is a useful appendix of commercial sources of poisons, and poisons found in household articles, and also a list of dosages of drugs commonly used in emergencies.

This book will certainly prove a valuable reference manual for all engaged in paediatrics.