BOOK REVIEWS


This volume is made up of the collected papers and discussions of a Symposium sponsored by the World Federation of Neurology in 1963. It must have been a most stimulating meeting for the participants, because not only were their numbers kept small (26) but the content of the papers and the discussions showed several interesting trends. The studies of the changes in structure and in function of the brain have recently gained impetus from various causes, more especially since the techniques of the neurophysiologists have been turned loose on human and animal problems not strictly within the narrow province of the 'pure' neurophysiologist. Perhaps this is best exemplified by the chapter by Dominick Purpura on the 'Relationship of seizure susceptibility to morphologic and physiologic properties of normal and abnormal miniature cortex'. This worker's approach to the problem of seizures is broad and catholic so that he can write with equal intimacy of the details of synaptic contacts in electron micrographs, patterns of dendrite branching in golgi preparations of neurones, and the significance of electrical activity in cortex and hippocampus. This correlative approach to brain development forms the central chapter of the symposium, and approximates as far as is possible to the ideal approach, for each single technical study inevitably leaves the reader with a sense of incompleteness. Grafstein's chapter on the 'Post natal development of the Corpus Callosum in the Cat' shows how the use of electrical methods can demonstrate lack of homogeneity in the myelination of fibres in the corpus callosum, and thereby emphasize problems of morphology and cell relationships that cannot be high-lighted by any other method. The use of the 'spreading depression' phenomenon for studying the development of neuroglial function (Bures, Fikora, and Mares), and correlation of such findings with assessment of cytoplasmic volume and electrolyte content of neuroglia (Schade) in both normal and anoxic brains, is an exciting approach to elements hitherto only capable of being studied under the microscope, or by crude and indirect chemical methods.

A good part of the book is taken up with electroencephalographic observations on young animals and humans, particularly in relation to seizure activity. The parameters of normality in this field are less clear than one would wish because of the limitations of the technique. Their analysis is important and must go on for practical clinical reasons, but the final interpretations will be dependent on the critical results of the experimentalist working on well-defined experimental systems.

This book is recommended to anyone interested in brain function whether they have personal experience of the techniques or not. It will certainly be of interest to those handling brain-damaged and epileptic children, and it is hoped that in it even the neuropathologist might find instruction.


Any work on paediatric neurology invites comparison with Frank Ford's monumental and highly personal volume on the same subject—a book that transcends its title to furnish an outstanding text of general neurology as well as of paediatric nervous disease.

Dr. Farmer's book is different but entirely admirable. The work of 13 authors, it is nevertheless much shorter than Ford and lacks the revealing clinical vignettes that make the larger volume so readable. The present work is, however, clearly written, elegantly produced, and superbly illustrated. The editor's preface suggests that it is intended for medical students, hospital residents, and practitioners, but it must be doubted whether many British medical students will read and fewer still purchase any volume on paediatric neurology. Nor is the present work sophisticated enough for the professed neurologist. Its use seems to be mainly for the clinical paediatrician, for whom it certainly provides an attractive up-to-date and well-documented guide to a field that is sadly neglected, especially in Britain. Many of the contents of Pediatric Neurology are of course covered by any of the standard neurological texts, but the authors, most of whom hail from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine at Chapel Hill, are both experienced and articulate, and the work abounds in evidence of the close clinical observation which characterizes the best paediatric practice.

If only as a valuable epitome of recent literature and for its treatment of the newer biochemical approaches to neurology this book should be in the library of every
children's hospital and department. It will not replace Ford but it is a useful supplement and a not inconsiderable competitor.


Years of ownership of successive editions of 'Griffith-Mitchell' and later 'Nelson' (usually of two copies, one at home and one at hospital), and the countless times your reviewer has turned to the book to look up facts, has gradually engendered in him a profound admiration for its qualities. These qualities are the comprehensive cover of the subject, so that it is rare not to find what one needs in the index; the balanced presentation of difficult, obscure, or controversial subjects; the intelligent choice of relatively few but key references; the remarkably uniform and effective literary style, terse without being staccato; and the 'up-to-dateness' made possible by a new edition every five years or so. The editor's ability to impose these qualities on all 85 contributors is indeed marvellous.

The new (8th) edition will certainly maintain the richly deserved success of its predecessors.


On setting out to write a textbook, the author's first rule should be to keep clearly in mind who his readers are going to be, and whom he is aiming to instruct. It is almost impossible to write effectively for more than one class of reader at once, but Professor Hutchison has aimed at doing so. He states that his intention was to produce a book intermediate in size between the usual undergraduate text and the large work of reference, yet covering the problems of the paediatrician and the family doctor. In the event he has written a textbook, parts of which are sufficiently detailed to be of use to the paediatrician (e.g. the clearly explained biochemistry of the metabolic disorders) but most of which is likely to be more valuable for the paediatric house officer or postgraduate student with some previous knowledge of paediatrics. Surely it is not a family doctor's book, for the author has purposely omitted so much that would be of importance for him? There is no section on the common infectious fevers, skin diseases or ear and eye disorders, and the word 'worms' does not appear in the index. No account of the normal child and how to assess deviation from normal development is included.

With these reservations, the book is carefully planned and well written. The word 'Practical' in the title is justified by the attention to detail in describing methods of diagnosis and treatment, including dosage of drugs. This is usually given on a bodyweight basis, though occasionally the dose recommended aims to ignore the age and size of the child, e.g. morphine gr. 1/6 (10 mg.) as part of the treatment of left ventricular failure in acute nephritis.

The metabolic and endocrine disorders are described with a clarity that is unusual in general textbooks of paediatrics. Enough biochemistry is included to explain the errors involved without drowning the reader in a sea of complex formulae. The advice on infant feeding is brief and reflects the author's individual views on the subject, which are easy to follow. The chapter on emotional disorders is the least valuable and perhaps reflects an outdated approach in dealing mainly with such things as thumb-sucking, nail-biting, and masturbation, which most paediatricians regard as relatively unimportant matters compared with the rest.

The illustrations are all well chosen and clear.

There is little doubt that Professor Hutchison has produced a book that will establish itself firmly amongst the several other British paediatric textbooks, but one cannot help regretting that he did not undertake the much needed full work of reference.


As the present fashion, this book is based on a symposium on modern trends and practice of chemotherapy in childhood. Organized by the editors, who are senior members of the medical staffs in the paediatric departments of the Universities of Tübingen and Münster, it was held at Reutlingen in South West Germany. In addition to contributions by 22 participants the book also includes relevant observations made during discussion. Skilful editing has by these means stressed controversial aspects and allowed differences of opinion to become evident where dogmatic statements might have incurred lively criticism.

No doubt dictated partly by the individual experience of the contributors and their special fields of interest, the topics in this treatise range somewhat haphazardly over more general subjects in the nature of the 'basis of antibiotic treatment'—antibiotics, steroids, γ-globulins; synergism and antagonism in infectious diseases; and 'The effect of chemotherapy on micro-organisms' to the more detailed exposition of the treatment of infections caused by specific organisms such as streptococcal diseases, tuberculosis, pertussis, listeriosis, toxoplasmosis, leptospiroses, and mycoses. Some contributors approached the main theme from a different angle by discussing the infections of particular organ systems. Thus the therapy of respiratory disorders, throat, nose, and ear infections, and diseases of the urinary and alimentary tracts are dealt with according to the organ system involved. Other authors preferred to expand their views on selected disease entities of varying aetiology such as purulent meningitis, osteomyelitis, septicemia, and bacterial endocarditis. We were astonished to find that in the management of meningococcal meningitis Friederisch recommends penicillin as the only drug to be given in maximal doses, i.e. 1 mega unit per kg. body weight per day to infants and 500,000 units/kg. body weight per day to older children and disregards completely the sulphonamides, a view that is not generally shared in this country. However, his results seemed to be very