Book Reviews


The first volume of the history of the British Paediatric Association covered the first 25 years (1928-1952) and was written by Dr. Hector Cameron. The second volume (1952-1968) has been written by Professor Victor Neale and represents his last contribution to paediatrics; he died shortly after completing the manuscript and the final editing was undertaken by Dr. A. W. Franklin.

In the main this second volume follows closely on the lines of its predecessor, giving details of the annual meetings of the Association and obituaries of the 40 members who had died during the past 16 years. There are, however, a number of noteworthy differences. The tempo in paediatrics has increased rapidly and this is reflected in the activities of the Association. In particular the formation of an Academic Board has added to the Scientific concentration. This is evident from the subjects discussed at the annual meetings, which show the widening scope of paediatrics; this is also made clear in the selections given in Appendix 1. The second appendix records the names of the 56 original members and the third is a graph showing the remarkable growth of the Association, since its beginning. The fourth Appendix gives a list of the memoranda published by the Association.

The value of the book is enhanced by the provision of an outstandingly good index which covers both volumes: the only omission of note was any reference to the Ulster Cup, for so long one of the highlights of the annual meetings, but perhaps this is in keeping with the scientific maturation of the Association.

The frontispiece photograph of Donald Paterson is both excellent and appropriate. In the first volume there were some gaps among the presidential photographs but in this one they are complete. There is also a group of the 1937 Windermere gathering and a view of the Royal Hotel at Scarborough which complements that of the Old England Hotel at Windermere shown in volume 1.

This book will be welcomed by all members of the Association and they will think even more kindly of Victor Neale for having provided them with such a satisfying historical portrayal of the steadily spreading influence of the Association.


This welcome volume details the author's wide experience in the complicated case of 430 children with spina bifida cystica over many years at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. In the hospital the annual number of children coming under treatment since 1961 has doubled, compared with the figures for the previous decade, while the death rate by the age of 3 years has dropped from 62% to 43%. Probably the increase

Asthma, though no new striking information comes to light.

The second Symposium opens with an interesting description of the discovery and development of the drug and a useful discussion of its mode of action. It prevents degradation of mast cells and release of constrictor substances and diminishes sensitivity to histamine. A series of 10 papers follow, 4 in English and the remainder with English translations, mainly outlining clinical trials. These confirm that the drug has a valuable role and is more useful in the labile asthmatic with relatively good ventilatory function between attacks, especially in subjects showing sensitivity to allergens.


This 400-page conference report contains some 40 contributions on various aspects of cystic fibrosis presented by an international panel of scientists and clinicians. The first part of the book deals with recent research into the molecular abnormality underlying the disease manifestations, both laboratory and clinical. Thereafter, a wide range of topics is reviewed including fetal and infant screening for the affection, heterozygote detection, the property and behaviour of aerosols, the microbiology and chemotherapy of respiratory tract involvement, studies on pulmonary, intestinal, and genitalic function, the effects of the disease on lung growth and structure and on cardiac function, and finally the feasibility of lung transplantation.

The discussions following each paper make interesting reading and add greatly to the individual presentations. An evening session of the Conference was devoted to a consideration of the therapeutic and prophylactic use of mist tents and the 20-page account of this topical and controversial subject is perhaps one of the highlights of the publication, at least for the clinically orientated reader.

Although most aspects of cystic fibrosis are covered in this comprehensive review there is one notable omission which did not escape the notice of Professor Harry Medovoy at the time. Thus, in his Concluding Address to the Conference, he rightly commented that future Cystic Fibrosis Conferences should not neglect the emotional aspects of this complicated chronic disease of global distribution.

One must praise the Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust for sponsoring these major international conferences and congratulate David Lawson, the editor, for producing such an interesting and readable account within 3 months of the occasion.

This book can certainly be recommended to paediatricians, but perhaps it should be said that a knowledge of current views on the structure and function of cell components is desirable if the reader wishes to make the best of the earlier pages dealing with basic defects.
in the size of the problem has been even greater in many British centres.

Although principally concerned with orthopaedic management, Menelaus shares the widespread view that this problem must be treated by a group of specialists at a specialist clinic and that the parents must be able to look to a co-ordinator of the work of these specialists, so that the children’s overall care and education is not interrupted more often than essential. About 7 admissions and 34 outpatient attendances were made by each of this group of children in their first 5 to 8 years, and smooth team-work is required. Menelaus feels that the speciality of the co-ordinator is less important than his special interest in the problem. Advice on setting up such a clinic is given, together with advice to be given to the parents of these children in a printed booklet.

The orthopaedic procedures detailed are those of standard British practice. The chief merit of the monograph is that they are now brought together for the benefit of easy reference, and that when a procedure has a low rate of success this is stated quite clearly. The need for improved bracing for these children is not emphasized and little attention is given to the research aspects of this subject.

The printing and paper are of high quality and the book is well illustrated with photographs and radiographs. There is a good index and bibliography.

**Foetal and Neonatal Pathology.** 3rd edition.


The third edition of Dr. Morison’s well-known book, though increased in length, retains the general form of its predecessors, with the chapters grouped to divide the book into three parts dealing respectively with disturbances during intrauterine life, those due to interference with adaptation to extrauterine life, and those due to pre- or postnatal infection.

In his preface the author states that he would like the book to be judged primarily as a guide to integrated thinking about the problems of perinatal disease. To this end there is considerable emphasis on the relation between perinatal physiology and all aspects of fetal and neonatal pathology.

The book does however suffer from the drawbacks that are to be expected in a work of this type, which has been revised several times over two decades. The steady increase in knowledge of perinatal physiology and pathology makes it impossible for any one author to give a wholly adequate view of all aspects of these subjects. In addition, the lack of drastic rewriting of the individual chapters, despite inclusion of much new material, renders it difficult for the reader to obtain a balanced view of current thought on any one topic.

The section on development of lung structure and function, for example, should have been far more radically revised and the old illustrations replaced by newer and more informative ones from the modern sources quoted.


This book records the proceedings of a conference on sudden death in infancy that was held in Seattle in 1969. It is based largely on the very active unit working in Seattle and follows a previous conference and report in 1963, and it is necessary to read the present report in conjunction with the earlier one (Wedgwood, J. R. and Benditt, E. P. (Ed.), ‘Sudden Death in Infants’, Public Health Service Publications No. 1412, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Bethesda, Md. 1964). The international contributions include the Ulster survey of 1965–67 and one from Czechoslovakia.

Workers in England will be interested to know that the problem of cot deaths, which is now termed ‘Sudden Infant Death Syndrome’, only became a respectable subject for scientific study in 1963.

The book contains several studies of epidemiology. These confirm factors already known such as the relation of the syndrome to prematurity, low income groups, virus infections, and, from the Czechoslovakian study, an interesting parallelism in incidence of cot deaths to that of general infant mortality and, in Canada, to periods of windy bad weather.

From the point of view of pathology there is little new apart from the non-confirmation of recent hypotheses such as parathyroid abnormalities, milk allergy, and abnormalities of the AV node system. A section on possible derangements of cardiopulmonary physiological reflexes such as the ‘diving reflex’ indicates the field along which further work appears to be the most actively required at the present time.

The major problem is the setting up of a valid, checkable hypothesis that will explain how infection, viral and enteral, can cause rapid death. The consensus is tending to expect death to be a multifactorial type.

The book is essential reading for anyone concerned with infant deaths. The Washington School of Medicine is to be congratulated on its work in this field.