

REVIEWS OF BOOKS : BOEKRESENSIES

THE PREMATURE BABY

The Premature Baby. Fourth Edition. By V. Mary Crosse. Pp. x+242. With 39 illustrations. 20s. net. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1957.

The popularity of this book can be gauged by the fact that the 4th edition has appeared only a few years after the first, and in the interval there have been many reprints. The book is a completely practical one designed for the guidance of nursing and medical personnel concerned with the welfare of premature infants. Every aspect of care is described in great detail ranging from the exact type of clothing most suitable for the babies to the meticulous care necessary in nursing to ensure asepsis and prevent any spread of infection.

Emphasis is placed on the necessity of having nursing personnel specially trained in the care of premature babies and conversant with the techniques of gastric feeding and resuscitation. The nurse should be capable of giving emergency treatment in the

event of accidents such as asphyxia or choking. It is also recommended that trained nurses be available to supervise premature baby care in the patient's home. This enables a mother to take her baby home relatively early; the advantage to the baby of a normal environment is obvious.

This book is to be recommended to anyone concerned with premature infants and would be invaluable as a guide in starting a premature baby unit.

D.M.

BIOLOGY OF NEGROES

Biologie du Noir. Matériaux et Recherches. By Georges A. Heuse. Pp. xix+347. Bruxelles: Problèmes d'Afrique Centrale. 1957.

This study of the biology of the African is based on extensive physiological, biochemical and psychological investigations of 100 healthy, black African soldiers stationed in Marseilles. The group was selected in preference to other groups in their home

environment because of the high incidence of disease throughout the tropics and the consequent difficulty in obtaining physiological readings. The book deals not only with this limited group but with many other studied in Africa, and interesting comparisons are made with the corresponding figures for Europeans both in temperate and in tropical environments. Statistical analysis is applied where appropriate.

Blood groups and blood chemistry were studied in detail and many physiological tests were performed. Particular emphasis is laid on neurological and psychological findings. The book has a comprehensive bibliography, a useful appendix, giving practical details of the various tests performed, and an excellent index. It is primarily a reference book and, as such, should be of great value to the physiologist, clinical pathologist, or physician dealing with the African. It brings together much information from very diverse sources.

A.W.S.

BRITISH ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MEDICAL PRACTICE

The British Encyclopaedia of Medical Practice. Including Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, Gynaecology and other Special Subjects. *Medical Progress* 1957. Editor in Chief, The Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.C.P., F.A.C.P., F.F.R. Pp. vi+339+(14). London: Butterworth & Co. (Publishers) Ltd. South African Office: Butterworth & Co. (Africa) Ltd., P.O. Box 792, Durban. 1957.

This addition to the annual series of 'Medical Progress' reveals steady progress in the advance of medical knowledge, and perhaps more critical and reasoned assessment of the discoveries of the previous years. As in former years, the book is divided into 3 sections. Part I is a collection of critical surveys by various authors on progress in the several branches of medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology. A fascinating section here is the contribution by Dr. Clarke on medical genetics, stressing the importance of diathesis, constitution or 'soil' in disease. He also has something to say on the genetic effects of radiation. In this section too the subject of vitamins is very fully dealt with by Dr. Leslie Harris. Part II deals with recent developments in pharmacology and therapeutics, and includes the newer antibiotics, tranquilizers, anticonvulsants, the hypoglycaemic sulphonamides, and hypotensive agents. Part III, as before, is a collection of abstracts from the world's Medical literature. The volume maintains the standard set in previous years.

A.L.

ALTERATIONS IN CARDIAC RHYTHM

Rhythmusstörungen des Herzens. Systematik, Ursache und klinische Bedeutung, Therapie. Von Prof. Dr. K. Spang. Mit Beiträgen: *Morphologie des Reizleitungssystems, ihre Orthologie und Pathologie.* Von Prof. Dr. W. Doerr, und *Physiologie der Herzirregularitäten.* Von Priv.-Doz. Dr. W. Trautwein. xvi+548 Seiten. 109 Abbildungen und ein Tafelanhang mit 228 Abbildungen. DM 148.00. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1957.

The volume is issued in 2 sections—the smaller being a supplement containing many abnormal E.C.G. waveforms. The E.C.G.'s are all numbered and appropriately described in the corresponding chapters.

The author commences this very interesting study by taking into review the work done by great workers of the past century. He subsequently deals with the evolutionary changes, embryology with special reference to the evolutionary remnants found in the human heart and their clinical significance.

The comparative anatomy is gone into and structures such as Cuvier's duct, S.A. node; S.V.C.; I.V.C. and azygos vein, together with origin of first heart beat are discussed. It is also pointed out that in some animal embryos the first heart beat commences unilaterally.

Following a resumé of cardiac anatomy the different conducting pathways are described as seen from the histological, anatomical and clinical point of view. The bundle of His is described as well as the role of the S.A. node (and subsequently relay stations) in cardiac arrhythmias.

The electrical properties of the heart are discussed and the genesis of the different phases of the E.C.G. explained in terms of elementary physics and E.C.G. diagrams.

The local effect of temperature, poisons and change in normal

physiology of the blood and blood vessels are then considered in relation to abnormal cardiac behaviour. Here the importance of the autonomic nervous system and pressure changes in the vascular system is pointed out. The E.C.G. aberrations following such stimuli are explained.

Abnormal conditions such as sinus tachycardia, sinus bradycardia, ectopic beats, flutter and fibrillation of various sources are reviewed and demonstrated by accompanying E.C.G.'s.

Cardiac nutrition is discussed with special reference to glycogen and the effect of fatty infiltration and the changes in cardiac function following, for example, digitoxin poisoning.

In conclusion the authors review the treatment, uses and misuses of some of the more common drugs used in cardiac abnormalities and emergencies. Drugs such as digitalis, chinidin, quinidine and some other combination and preparations are reviewed and the correct dosage is recommended.

J.H.

MEDICAL MYCOLOGY

An Introduction to Medical Mycology. 4th Edition. By George M. Lewis, M.D., Mary E. Hopper, M.S., J. Walter Wilson, M.D. and Orda A. Plunkett, Ph.D. Pp. xvii + 453. 118 Figures. 2 Plates. \$15.00. Chicago: Year Book Publishers, Inc. 1958.

For close on two decades this volume has been recognized as a leading text-book on this branch of medicine. The publication of a new edition is a dermatological event. Professors Wilson and Plunkett have collaborated with the original authors in producing this edition, their main contribution being the rewriting of the chapters on the deep mycoses and on contaminants.

The book has outgrown its original title. To continue calling it 'An Introduction' is an understatement. A very full chapter is devoted to each dermatophyte. The 118 illustrations, are skilfully selected and technically perfect. 'Medical mycology, the oldest of the microbiologic sciences, still presents many unsolved problems. This may perhaps be due to the conservatism of many dermatologists who will not think aetiologically. *Tinea barbae*, for example, is not a clinical entity but can be caused by several distinct fungi, each giving a distinct clinical picture, varying from severe inflammatory swellings to hardly perceptible follicular or scaly patches.'

The practitioner will appreciate the chapters on therapy which is discussed in detail. All the well-known, and some of the lesser known, fungicides are critically evaluated. Most dermatologists will concur with the opinions expressed but few will agree that Castellani's paint should not be used more than once a day.

The book is essential to the library of all dermatologists and clinicians. In this country in particular, where regional mycology still presents an open field for research, every student and practitioner should read this interesting and stimulating work.

J.J.J.

THE NURSING OF MENTAL DEFECTIVES

The Nursing of Mental Defectives. By Charles H. Hallas, S.R.N., R.M.N., R.N.M.D., S.T.D. (Lond.). Pp. 196. 9 Plates. 21s. Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1958.

This is a new book which is an excellent textbook on the subject. As the nursing of defectives is mainly concentrated in Government institutions in the Union, and the teaching of nurses takes place at these hospitals, for which a standard textbook for South African conditions has been supplied, it is unlikely that this book will be extensively used in this country. It follows the syllabus laid down by the General Medical Council in England and brings out all the changes and modern trends in this form of nursing, particularly emphasizing the positive outlook.

It could well be read by nurses seeking a wider knowledge based on experience in another country and will no doubt interest all whose work brings them into contact with mental defectives.

A.H.T.

THE DIENCEPHALON

The Functional Organization of the Diencephalon. By W. R. Hess. Edited by John R. Hughes, M.A. (Oxon.), Ph.D. Pp. xii + 180. 61 Figures. \$7.00. New York and London: Grune & Stratton, Inc. 1958.

Like the interesting book this author wrote in 1954, *Monographs in Biology and Medicine*, 3, Grune and Stratton, New York, the latest translation of one of his books is well worth the attention of

neurologists and those interested in the physiology of the brain.

It should be made clear that the two books are similar in many respects and the present volume, dealing with the functional organization of the diencephalon, is a more detailed version of the earlier book.

The study of the diencephalon was neglected for many generations by anatomists, physiologists and pharmacologists, and, through the painstaking investigations of Hess, much has been learnt. By the use of fine electrodes inserted into the diencephalon, he was able to map out its physiologically important areas. The

localization of these centres was achieved in two ways: first, by stimulating the areas where the electrodes were inserted and recording cinematographically the phases of animal behaviour; and then by studying the histology of the areas stimulated and applying to them a special staining technique.

The fundamental statement made by Hess that, 'it can hardly be wrong to regard the diencephalon, rather than the cortex, as the true central organ of the body' becomes credible when the numerous experiments performed by him are studied.

M.W.