

REVIEWS OF BOOKS : BOEKRESENSIES

CARDIAC ABNORMALITIES

Die Lungenarterienbahn bei angeborenen Herzfehlern. Heft 2. Von Priv.-Doz. Dr. K. Köhn und Dr. M. Richter. viii+112 Seiten. 52 Abbildungen. DM 29.50. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag. 1958.

By way of introduction the authors devote a good deal of the chapter reviewing the embryology of the heart and the anlage of the pulmonary circulation. They also explain in brief the secondary changes which occur resulting in the diminished number of bloodvessels found in the adult. Special stress is laid on the primitive aortic arches and embryological shunt which sometimes persists as the well-known patent Ductus arteriosus.

Based on this, there follows a description of the congenital cardiac abnormalities such as Fallots tetralogy, trilogly, Lutembachers syndrome and numerous other conditions which do not render themselves available for description because of lack of space.

The different methods of coming to a correct diagnosis, together with special investigations, are reviewed. The authors also made a very careful study of the conditions commonly associated with abovementioned abnormalities.

The text is illustrated with appropriate photographs of histological sections obtained from post-mortem study of the more common cardiac abnormalities, based on those with increased pulmonary circulation and those without.

The authors found that these congenital abnormalities are commonly associated with numerous microscopic emboli of the lung fields. It is their experience too, that patent Ductus very often presents with pulmonary A-V fistulae. Similarly it was observed that the Eisenmenger complex usually presents with large fibrin pedicles of the pulmonary arteries. The authors also give a detailed description of the changes encountered during hypoxia and over-oxygenation, which explains the changes seen in the lungs of premature babies exposed to prolonged or over-oxygenation.

D.J.H.

CIRCULATION

Circulation. Proceedings of the Harvey Tercentenary Congress held on 3 June-8 June 1957 at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, London. Edited by John McMichael, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. Pp. xxiii+503. Illustrations. 50s. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1958.

The proceedings of this tercentenary Congress held in London during June 1957, have been admirably transcribed and collated, and the whole work is presented in book form. One cannot but marvel at the impetus which Harvey imparted to the study of the circulation.

It is apparent from this work that the circulating aspects of the human body has become such an intricate field of study that it is not possible for any one to encompass the whole. Harvey could not but be proud of the edifice which has been built on the foundation which he laid. Nor could he be ashamed of the minds of the men who have followed.

The editor, himself renowned for his research into the circulation, brings to us a whole galaxy of scientists and doctors working and making important contributions to our knowledge of the circulation.

The initial chapters cover the historical aspects of Harvey's life and work and give us an appreciation of the setting which enabled him to make his discoveries. Subsequent sections are devoted to the role of the heart, to haemodynamics, the coronary circulation, the pulmonary circulation, cardiac surgery, the cerebral and splanchnic circulation and the peripheral circulation.

Clinical research, highly specialized laboratory techniques and the surgical contributions are all presented and one gains conception of the enormous advances which have been made especially in more recent years.

This book also contains a unique discussion conducted by Trans-Atlantic radio-telephone between the annual meeting of the American Medical Association in New York and the Harvey tercentenary congress in London. By making the proceedings of this congress available, McMichael has ensured that Harvey and the work which has emanated from him and his followers, will find its way to every student of the circulation.

A.J.B.

NORMAL AND ABNORMAL LABOUR

Human Parturition—Normal and Abnormal Labor. By Norman F. Miller, B.S., M.D., F.A.C.S., A.C.O.G., T. N. Evans, A.B., M.D., F.A.C.S., A.C.O.G. and R. L. Haas, A.B., M.D., F.A.C.S., A.C.O.G. Pp. 248. 66 Illustrations. 60s. London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox Ltd. 1958.

This book deals with labour and its complications and the authors, who are attached to the University of Michigan Medical School, set out 'to make available a concise delineation of basic factors and mechanisms involved in human parturition'. Moreover, the authors state in their preface that they believe the material

presented can play an important part in student training and it is also their intent that the book should serve as a convenient guide for the practitioner attending women in labour.

In my opinion this is a most unsatisfactory book for both student and practitioner. Throughout the entire book facts are presented in tabular form and make most irritating reading. No student can possibly study midwifery from a synopsis like this—even though he may use it only to complement his standard text-book. Similarly, the practising doctor would rather turn to a small work written in coherent and readable prose.

This small book of only 248 pages costs 60 shillings overseas (and perhaps more in South Africa).

E.M.S.

SIR CHARLES BELL

Sir Charles Bell—His Life and Times. By Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor, K.B.E., C.B., F.R.C.S. and E. W. Walls, M.D., Ch.B., B.Sc., F.R.S. (Ed.). Pp. xii+288. 49 Illustrations. 42s. net+2s. Postage Abroad. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1958.

The first half of the 19th century was an exciting and fascinating period of British history. It was the world of the eccentric Georges, regency bucks, and great figures in literature, art, music, drama, politics and science. The authors paint this decor in vivid colours and then lead the *gramatis persona* on to the stage. Sir Charles Bell is remembered as anatomist, physiologist, surgeon, artist and philosopher. In each of these roles his performance was distinguished.

As the biographers unfold the life of Sir Charles Bell for us, we are given brief, penetrating glimpses of the anatomy schools of London and the body snatchers, resurrectionists and sack-'em-up men, and later the practice of surgery of that era. The drama of the discovery of the function of the nerve roots and the claims of Bell, Magendie and Mayo as to precedence, is accurately and fairly presented.

It is fitting that the biographers are Bell's countrymen and also distinguished 'Middlesex Men'.

M.S.

CARDIOLOGY

Basic Cardiology. By T. E. Gumpert, M.B., Ch.B. (Sheff.), F.R.C.P. (Lond.). Pp. vii+168. 72 Illustrations. 25s. 0d. Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1958.

This book is written primarily for medical students and has a small place in the ever-increasing number of books on cardiology. The author attempts to cover the field of cardiovascular disease in a few short chapters, high-lighting the important features that the student is expected to digest and know.

It is a pity that otherwise excellent electrocardiographic reproductions are marred by careless labelling. Also in a book of this kind, one does not expect so many controversial statements. For example, in discussing the indications for mitral valvotomy, the author regards the presence of a Graham Steell murmur as a contra-indication to valvotomy. Calcification of the mitral valve or cardiac enlargement are likewise regarded as contra-indications. Few people would agree with these statements and students, in particular, should not be so instructed. Several other examples could be given, such as a statement that in pure pulmonary stenosis anastomosis of the subclavian artery to the pulmonary artery has been used as a method of treatment, when this type of operation is strongly contra-indicated. Patency of the auricular septum is confused with foramen ovale. These and other glaring examples mar the value of the book.

V.S.