

BOEKBESPREKINGS : BOOK REVIEWS

OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology. Vol. 3, No. 1. Obstetric Emergencies edited by Martin L. Stone, M.D. Pediatric Gynecology edited by John W. Huffman, M.D. Pp. 264. Illustrations. Subscription to series: \$18.00 a year. New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc. 1960.

During the past 20 years the main object of the obstetrician has been to reduce the infant and maternal mortality. Antibiotics and better aseptic techniques have mainly been responsible for a marked drop in infant and maternal mortality, but in spite of all our modern methods, there are still a number of preventable maternal deaths. These maternal deaths are mainly from the so-called obstetric emergencies; hence a detailed knowledge of this branch of obstetrics is absolutely essential to all practising obstetrics. The first part of this volume contains a concise account of all these emergencies as well as a detailed account of their treatment. Some of the opinions expressed are perhaps controversial, but the whole subject is so well discussed that it can be highly recommended to medical students, general practitioners, and consultants.

The second part of this volume on paediatric gynaecology is of particular interest since there are very few accounts of this subject as a whole. The infrequency with which the practising gynaecologist sees gynaecological paediatric problems, sometimes makes the diagnosis difficult and the management uncertain. The authors have thoroughly realized this and have thus given a compact account of the subject without sacrificing any detail—so that it can also be used as a reference book for the busy practitioner.

Finally, I can only congratulate the authors on this valuable addition to our gynaecological library.

R.W.A.N.

ACTION OF INSULIN

The Mechanism of Action of Insulin. A Symposium organized by the British Insulin Manufacturers. Consulting Editor: F. G. Young, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S. Editors for the British Insulin Manufacturers: W. A. Broom, B.Sc., F.R.I.C. and F. W. Wolff, M.D. Pp. xvi+320. Illustrated. R3.25. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1960.

This book strikes me (who also attended the symposium which it reports) as fascinating, chiefly because it indicates to some extent the vast amount of work which has been and is being done on insulin, and how very little is yet known of its precise modes of action. It is difficult to single out individual contributions. We have, among others, Nicol discussing the different chemical varieties of insulin; Chain (a co-discoverer of penicillin and Nobel-prize winner) giving his entirely revolutionary ideas on the action of insulin, backed by some fantastic machines for 'quantitative bidimensional radio-chromatography'; de Duve upholding the view that insulin *does* act directly on the liver; several of the insulin bio-assay experts discussing their methods, results and the insulin-antagonists; Butterfield's fascinating red-herring which started with burns; and Levine's charming summary of present views on the mode of action of the sulphonylureas. Finally we are allowed a little clinical excursion into prediabetes.

Anyone interested in the basic disorder in diabetes or in carbohydrate metabolism should read this volume. The symposium as a whole was a fine illustration of cooperation between four important British drug firms (comprising the British Insulin Manufacturers) for the benefit of medical science. Similar efforts would be welcomed in this country.

W.P.U.J.

THORACOTOMY

Techniques of Thoracotomy. By B. T. le Roux, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.S.E. Pp. xi+94. 65 illustrations. R5.50. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1961.

Surgical technique is largely an individual expression of the art which surgeons practice, and, as such, it is controversial. The techniques of thoracotomy are no exception. Whereas most thoracic surgeons will differ from Mr. le Roux on minor details, no one can fail to benefit by reading his detailed accounts of how to gain access to the thorax and how to close a chest. For the surgical apprentice and the general surgeon who sometimes ventures into the chest, this monograph should provide a valuable guide.

Important principles are briefly referred to in the introduction. The author's approach and closure for all the usual intrathoracic and thoraco-abdominal procedures (practised by the Regional Thoracic Unit, Edinburgh) are described in detail, from the induction of anaesthesia until the patient leaves the theatre.

Production is excellent and the numerous colour photographs more than compensate for the price of this small monograph. It was a pleasure to read an account based on personal experience, and refreshing to find a text unmarred by references.

G.S.M.B.

YEAR BOOK OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

The Year Book of Orthopedics and Traumatic Surgery, 1959-1960. Edited by R. K. Ghormley, M.D. and H. H. Young, M.D. With a section on Plastic Surgery, edited by N. Owens, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.I.C.S. Pp. 448. 217 illustrations. \$8.00. Chicago: The Year Book Publishers, Inc. 1960.

In spite of the death of Dr. Ralph K. Ghormley, this year's Year Book is well up to the standard of its predecessors.

As evidenced by the various papers, there is an increasing realization of the importance of a basic training in peripheral vascular surgery for those surgeons who are dealing with trauma generally and fractures in particular. So much can be done now by various techniques, that it is certain that more limbs, or portions of limbs, will be saved as a result of this knowledge.

The use of polyurethane polymer (Ostamer) is reported in this issue. As yet finality has not been reached as to the desirability or otherwise of its properties in bone surgery. This controversial substance has also been the subject of an editorial in the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*.

It is a particular pleasure to note in this issue abstracts of two papers which originally appeared in the *South African Medical Journal*.

This year's edition is strongly recommended to those who wish to 'keep up with their reading'.

A.S.

PAEDIATRICS

Advances in Pediatrics. Vol. XI. Edited by S. Z. Levine. Pp. 285. Illustrated. \$9.00. Chicago: Year Book Publishers, Inc. 1960.

This excellent volume presents six up-to-date monographs each with its own extensive bibliography. The topics chosen fall into two groups, one intended for the general practitioner and the other for the paediatrician.

The practitioner will enjoy an easy-to-read article on respiration and respiratory diseases of the newborn, and will learn a great deal about hyaline membrane disease, meconium aspiration, and other syndromes which cause respiratory distress. He will be pleased by a practical article on hormone therapy in rheumatic fever, in which the diagnosis of carditis is detailed and the value of short-term steroid therapy is stressed.

In a chapter on diarrhoea and dehydration, the methods used in a Chilean outpatient department are outlined—a useful article since our conditions are so very similar. An article on allergy teaches an approach to that common problem, the allergic child.

Hypo- and hypernatraemia and the neurologic regulation of sodium concentration are discussed under the formidable title 'Clinical and experimental interrelationship of sodium and the central nervous system'. To complete this satisfying volume there is a very interesting chapter describing the clinical syndromes in which the urinary excretion of amino acids is abnormal.

All in all a very valuable book.

L.S.

GENERAL ANAESTHESIA FOR NEUROSURGERY

A Practice of General Anaesthesia for Neurosurgery. By R. I. W. Ballantine, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.A., F.F.A.R.C.S. Pp. viii+152. 68 illustrations. R2.75 net. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1960.

In line with the growing tendency to produce monographs on specialized aspects of anaesthesia, this book is a most welcome addition. The authors describe the various problems in the field of anaesthesia for neurosurgery, and then, systematically, the means of combating them. Posture-induced hypotension and hypothermia are adequately described. There is a useful section on head injuries, and, finally, a chapter on pre- and postoperative care.

Possibly the most important feature of this book is the description of the various mechanical and technical difficulties which may arise during the course of long operations. All these problems have been described in the literature, but it is difficult for those infrequently confronted by neurosurgical problems to obtain an adequate, complete picture.

For the anaesthetist who finds general anaesthesia for neurosurgery difficult and demanding, this book will be helpful, and can be warmly recommended.

P.S.J.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

Psychotherapists in Action. By Hans H. Strupp. Pp. xiv+338. \$8.75. New York and London: Grune & Stratton, Inc. 1960.

The active processes which wreak change in the patient as a result of psychotherapy are not completely known. Certainly a major factor lies in the personality of the therapist and in his relationship with the patient, but since therapists are not standard units there is an enormous amount of variation of this factor which extends also to their clinical observations, judgements, and therapeutic operations. All these are extremely difficult to evaluate because of the highly subjective nature of psychotherapy and the many intangible human elements that are involved.

The author, by means of an ingenious technique, has managed to invade this private realm to give us a fascinating picture of what goes on in the psychiatrist's mind as he works, and the transactions that take place between him and his patient. A standard film sequence of an unrehearsed psychotherapeutic interview was shown to a series of 237 psychotherapists ranging from real experts to veriest newcomers, and belonging to all schools of current psychiatric thought. They were then questioned according to a detailed protocol for their reactions to the screened situation—what they thought of the therapist's technique, the patient's reactions, how they would have handled it, the prognosis, psychodynamics, etc. The results are then analysed in a workmanlike statistical fashion, and the result is an absorbing and enlightening survey of contemporary psychotherapy. The final section of the book is devoted to an analysis of psychotherapeutic techniques and a general discussion of the factors and problems involved in research on psychotherapy.

All in all this is a most rewarding and unique book, and all psychiatrists and psychologists who take their psychotherapy seriously will gain much from the rich fund of material it contains.

L.S.G.

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Synopsis of Ophthalmology. By William H. Havener, B.A., M.D., M.S. (Ophtha.). Pp. 288. 189 illustrations. South African price R5.75. St. Louis: C. V. Mosby Co. 1960.

Another of the synopsis series, this volume is particularly useful for undergraduate reference in a speciality often neglected for lack of short, concise teaching.

Attractively presented and well indexed, this little book deals comprehensively and concisely with all the common, and many rather less common ophthalmic disorders.

The chapter on medical ophthalmology and that on treatment, discussed by means of illustrative cases, are particularly useful.

This book is recommended to all medical students and to general practitioners who wish to gain some knowledge of ophthalmology without having to wade through the larger reference books.

P.A.T.

THE OLDER PATIENT

The Older Patient. By 21 authors. Edited by Wingate M. Johnson, M.D. Pp. 589+xiv. Illustrated. \$14.50. New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc. 1960.

This book is well planned to cover the field of geriatric practice. Each chapter has been carefully selected, in order to bring the particular problems of the older patient into prominence.

The importance of anatomic changes which occur with age are stressed. The particular diagnostic aspects of disease in this age group are described and there are excellent sections devoted to such matters as nutrition, relief of pain, and surgical procedures.

Of importance too is the emphasis placed on psychological factors, and there is a special chapter on mental disorders of the aging. The various therapeutic approaches are adequately set out.

This volume should prove to be a very practical guide to the diagnosis and management of the older patient—a field of medical practice which is so rapidly growing in importance. A.J.B.

PAEDIATRICS FOR NURSES

A Handbook of Paediatrics for Nurses in General Training. 2nd Edition. By Q. M. Jackson, D.N. (Lond.). Pp. viii+105. R1.25 net. London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd. 1960.

This is a noble effort to give to the student-nurse who is in general training some knowledge of paediatrics. To do that in 100 pages of a small book with relatively large print is a formidable task and criticism must be tempered by the limitation of space. Quite a lot of medical information could have been omitted and more nursing detail put in, e.g. for gastric lavage, how far is the tube to be passed and how much fluid used at each filling? Some archaic and unnecessary manoeuvres should by this time have been recognized as such, e.g. strapping a coin on an umbilical hernia and the necessity for interruption of a baby's feed to get up wind. History-taking and the normal haematological variations are not needed for nursing, but at least there can be no complaint that the buyers will not get value for their money. F.J.F.