

## BOEKBESPREKINGS : BOOK REVIEWS

### PERIPHERAL FACIAL PALSY

*Peripheral Facial Palsy*. Pathology and surgery. By K. Kettel, M.D. Pp. 341. 127 figures. 120s. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd. 1959.

Dr. Karsten Kettel is chief surgeon in the department of otorhinolaryngology at the Frederiksborg Central Hospital, Denmark. He is widely known as an authority on peripheral facial-nerve palsy, and has acquired an impressive personal experience in this field. This monograph is based on the experience gained in 311 facial-nerve operations (233 facial-nerve decompressions and 78 nerve-grafting and nerve-suture operations). This is a large series and his views must therefore command respect.

The monograph covers peripheral facial palsy in all its aspects and, apart from his own views on the subject, Dr. Kettel has been most generous in his acknowledgement of significant contributions by other workers in this field. The bibliography is indeed an exhaustive one and this further enhances the value of the book.

It is clear that there are knotty problems still to be solved, and their solution depends on cooperation and team-work between the specialist in physical medicine, the physiologist, the neurologist, and the otologist. For this reason, ideally, cases of peripheral facial paralysis should be referred to specialized centres with the necessary personnel and equipment for adequate investigation and treatment.

Risking an accusation of pettiness, the reviewer cannot but feel that the publishers merit a mild rebuke for the number of minor spelling and printing errors that mar an otherwise excellent publication.

Otologists and others interested in the subject will want to acquire this volume for their bookshelves.

D.V.M.

### OSTEOCHONDRITIS DISSECANS

*Osteochondritis Dissecans*. Loose bodies in joints. etiology, pathology, treatment. By I. S. Smillie, O.B.E., Ch.M., F.R.C.S. (Ed.), F.R.F.P.S. Pp. viii + 224. Illustrations, 60s. + 1s. 11d. postage. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1960.

The author of this monograph states that the condition of osteochondritis dissecans is not a single entity, but that there are different aetiologies for similar radiological appearances in different age-groups, which he lists. However, his major tenet about the condition is shown in the following passage (p.15): 'Thus osteochondritis dissecans superimposed on an anomaly of ossification is no different than osteochondritis dissecans occurring *de novo* whether it is in the knee or in the head of the second metatarsal. In each instance there is a local vascular deficiency leading to vulnerability to injury and eventually to a form of fatigue fracture; and the same stress which interferes with the blood supply is responsible for the eventual fracture'.

In selected cases he advises operative treatment for the cure of the condition but (p.131) 'judgment, more difficult to acquire than technical skill, is necessary'. On the evidence presented it is difficult to accept unequivocally that the ultimate osteoarthritis of the joint is either delayed or prevented by operative intervention. Radiographic appearances are notoriously deceptive in this condition.

After reading this excellent monograph, one is left to reflect with Goethe who wrote in *Maxims and Reflections*, 'The highest happiness of man as a thinking being is to have probed what is knowable, and quietly to revere what is unknowable'.

The book itself is well produced—a typical Livingstone production. Need one say more?

A.S.