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Book Reviews

Abstract

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PREMATU RE LY BORN INFANT. C. M. Drillien. Pp. 376. Price 50/-. E. & S. Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1963.

This book describes the layout and planning of a survey to determine the effect of various factors on the baby of low birth weight. It goes on to set out the differences in the effects of many of these on the premature and normal control groups studied. There is a multitude of data on the problems of prematurity, but for the student not adept at "table scanning" it would be helpful to have a comprehensive summary of the main findings. In all, this is a book for the specialist, but the introductory chapter concerning definition and aims of the study, and also the difficulties and planning of such a survey make useful reading for the relatively uninitiated.

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R.J.H.McL.

A PORTFOLIO OF CHEST RADIOGRAPHS. B. T. Le Roux and T. C. Dodds. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Edinburgh and London 1964. Pp. 366. Price 60/-.

The purpose of this book is to acquaint the student with the common radiographic abnormalities in the chest. Over 750 X-rays taken from the collection of the Regional Thoracic Unit in Edinburgh are used to illustrate common features. The emphasis is on seeing the abnormalities, not once but many times, so that the range of the normal and the abnormal can be appreciated.

Each plate is described in a brief legend which gives clinical details and also a succinct account of the main radiographic features—the type of description required of the candidate in oral examinations! The short text gives the radiological approach to each group of conditions with some mention of the type of treatment that would be necessary and the further assessment of progress. Thus the student can study radiographic abnormalities within the context of treatment and prognosis.

The quality of the plates is first-class throughout with a minimum of loss of contrast, a common fault in the reproduction of X-rays. The criticism anticipated by the authors, that the book has a surgical bias, can be offset by the fact that throughout an approach to chest X-rays is taught that is applicable to films of any condition, medical or surgical.

The price may seem excessive, but it is realistic considering the many illustrations. Expense may debar all but a few students from purchasing this book, but it shall certainly be read by many.

J.A.R.

TEXTBOOK OF MEDICAL TREATMENT. Sir Derek Dunlop, Sir Stanley Davidson, Stanley Alstead. Ninth Edition. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1964. Pp. 979. Price £3 5/-.

The authors of any textbook of medical treatment have a number of difficult tasks. They must attempt to blend valuable, established methods with recent developments, and to give a balanced discussion where views differ. Full consideration must be given to important and common conditions, but the rare illnesses, so dear to the heart of the more academic physician, must not be neglected. The authors should lead the reader to a full understanding of the management of patients, yet the book should not be unwieldy, and must be up to date.

The high reputation of this text is based essentially on its success in carrying out just these tasks. The new edition is in the tradition of its predecessors. All chapters have had some alterations, and six have been completely rewritten by new authors. It is remarkable that at a time in which new editions are usually synonymous with new additions the editors have managed to shorten it by ten pages. A small change, perhaps, but one in the right direction. Undoubtedly the 'Textbook of Medical Treatment' shall continue to be a valuable source of knowledge and advice for both student and practitioner alike.

D.L.W.D.

THE EYE IN GENERAL PRACTICE. C. R. S. Jackson. Third Edition. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1964. Pp. 164. Price 25/-.

This excellent little book, already well established as the most popular text amongst students in the ophthalmology class, has been further improved by the addition of a number of simple diagrams which simplify the understanding of clinical findings. It is principally this modification which has caused the slight increase in size. There is no doubt that these diagrams are worth many words of explanation.

A brief glossary has also been inserted, and this will be found very useful to the beginner. The text remains very much the same as in the second edition, but some revision has been made, and to keep the book down in size, some of the less important material deleted.

The illustration of branch vein thrombosis has been rotated and now shows the lesion at its commonest site, the upper temporal vein as described in the text.

Though the price has increased by four shillings since the previous edition, there is no doubt that this book will remain both a favourite with students and a very convenient guide to the general practitioner.

R.R.S.H.

THE EVOLUTION OF PSYCHIATRY IN SCOTLAND. Sir David Kennedy Henderson. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1964. Pp. 300. Price 32/6.

This book contains many personal reminiscences on the development of psychiatry from 1907 up to the present day, of one who has lived through a phase of revolutionary growth. As such it forms an interesting record and valuable source of reference of those who were prime movers in Scottish psychiatry.

The earlier chapters are concerned with the story of the French influence on the Edinburgh School, telling how the first series of systematic and clinical lectures on mental diseases was instituted by Alexander Morison in 1823. Morison had studied in Paris under Pinel and Esquirol in 1818, and subsequently became a firm disciple of Esquirol. In 1823, Morison drew up a plan to establish a Professorship of Mental Diseases in Edinburgh but the University turned this down, it being considered too specialised a topic! It was not till nearly one hundred years later, 1919, that the chair of psychiatry was endowed.

It is unlikely that many students would wish to buy this sort of book, especially as much of the more important events are mentioned in Sir David's well known textbook, however, for those interested in the details of Scottish psychiatry, or those interested in the reminiscences of a very remarkable man, this book will provide interesting reading.

R.S.

NOTES ON CLINICAL SIDEROOM METHODS.

Board of Medical Studies, University of Edinburgh. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., Edinburgh, 1963. Illustrated, 7s. 6d.

In 79 small pages, this booklet describes the basic principles and the techniques of all those tests which can be carried out in the sideroom of the normally equipped ward. Obviously a book of this size cannot go into details of the interpretation of such tests and so it in no way competes with the larger texts in this respect.

However it does present in a most useful manner the sort of information which one actually requires when faced with the practical problem of how to do a particular test. Every student at this University is faced with just such a problem in part of the final examination, and surely every student in the country will meet such problems in the natural course of his career. A thorough acquaintance with this book will prove invaluable to all clinical students and all housemen.

When called to perform some emergency test in the middle of the night, even the most bleary-eyed will find the instructions simple to follow, and there

is no doubt that the value of any test depends first upon its correct execution!

Prepared by clinicians, it is completely down-to-earth, and does not include anything that is not of genuine importance or any technique which is not in current use.

The minimum of essential illustrations increase the value of the book as does the convenient index. Without doubt, this will become a minor classic.

R.R.S.H.

A SYNOPSIS OF GASTROENTEROLOGY. By G. N. Chandler. 200 pp. 12 illus. Price 27/6. John Wright & Sons Ltd., Bristol 1963.

I often wonder what group of people uses a book of this kind; that is a synopsis of one of the major medico-surgical specialties. For those whose main interest is gastroenterology, it has little or no value on account of its brevity and for those whose interest lies outside this field, the material contained in this book is largely included in any comprehensive general text-book of medicine. However, such criticism can be levelled at all books of this type and within these limitations this text is in general a good one. One advantage of this kind of book I suppose is that it can be kept up to date more easily than general text-books. In the main, this is so with this book, but why does the author devote half a page to a completely obsolete investigation like the fractional test meal and only the same space to the much more important maximal histamine test. In this latter section, he makes no mention of the interpretation of the results of this test and in what ways the information obtained from it may be useful to the surgeon in his choice of the best type of operation in any given case.

Apart from this, the section on peptic ulcer is a good and comprehensive one as are the sections on small and large bowel disease and in particular on steatorrhea and ulcerative colitis.

One major omission I feel, is adequate subsections on the psychiatric aspects of certain gastrointestinal diseases such as peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

In conclusion this book is a good example of its kind but I feel with rather a limited appeal.

I.D.S.G.