

Reviews

HAEMATOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

Atlas of the Blood in Children. By Kenneth D. Blackfan, M.D., and Louis K. Diamond, M.D. With illustrations by C. Merrill Leister, M.D. (Pp. 320; coloured illustrations. \$12.00 or 66s. 6d.) New York: The Commonwealth Fund; London: Oxford University Press. 1944.

In these days when the emphasis is all on functional rather than factual teaching, the reviewer may well feel an initial prejudice on being handed a large volume on so specialized a subject as the haematology of childhood. Nevertheless, this feeling of prejudice rapidly changes to one of pleasure in handling this exquisitely produced atlas of haematology. The paper, the typography, and the ample margins remind one of the spacious days that have gone. The 70 coloured plates are not only accurate, they are works of art which are as beautiful as a collection of jewels or stamps. It seems, indeed, that in our modern emphasis on function we may be in danger of missing a vital element in medicine—the element that is present in the anatomical plates of Vesalius, in the illustrations to French's *Differential Diagnosis*, in the Hunterian and Wellcome Museums. That element is the drama of fact. The student who looks through this atlas may learn nothing of the venous pressure in profound anaemia or the life span of the erythrocyte, but he will recognize some of the cruellest denizens of the jungle of disease, such as haemolytic anaemia and leukaemia, and he will remember their bright and fearsome images when less vital memories have faded from his mind. In fact it is possible that the recent approach to medical education has been far too rationalistic, and we have been overlooking the importance of interest in making learning easy. The emotions which inspire the collector and the artist have been powerful aids to medical teaching in the past, and we cannot afford to sacrifice such forces when the art is so long and life so fleeting. One cannot help feeling that the average student might get more out of this book on diseases of the blood than out of Sir Thomas Lewis's *Exercises in Human Physiology*. Perhaps there is a tendency nowadays to put the cart, before the horse in clinical education, and the student, like the child, might do well to begin with concrete phenomena, with patients and blood pictures, and end up with general principles and abstract reasoning. However this may be, we should like to see this atlas on the table of any department of paediatrics which teaches students. The 144 pages of text are simple and balanced. They are based on experience of more than 5,000 infants and children with disorders of the blood, and even senior haematologists will pick up something of value, as in the advice to give iron salts in fruit juice rather than milk, to avoid precipitation as phosphate; or in the evidence of the transient occurrence of pernicious anaemia in infancy as a result of acute infections and temporary achlorhydria. There is a full bibliography. The book is indeed a fitting memorial to the senior author, Dr. Kenneth D. Blackfan, who died in 1941 after a life largely devoted to the study of the blood in childhood.

BIOLOGY AND HUMAN WELFARE

New Biology—I. Edited by M. L. Johnson and Michael Abercrombie. (Pp. 116; with isotype charts and other illustrations. 9d.) London: Penguin Books.

The Penguin *New Biology—I* contains an astonishing amount of interesting information in a small compass. The editors' aim—helping to re-orientate biology teaching towards questions of human welfare—has been well carried out. It might be thought that the potato was not a very encouraging subject from that point of view, but Dr. R. N. Salaman, a recognized authority, presents us with a fascinating study, beginning with the original culture of the potato in Peru, where it was associated with a horrible ritual of face mutilation to imitate the "eyes." The introduction into Europe of the potato minus the ritual is told, and of the resistance to such a novelty met with everywhere except in Ireland. The social effects of the introduction of a cheap abundant food are discussed, and its influence in keeping wages low. The food value of the potato and its proneness to disease

are also clearly described. Prof. Lancelot Hogben gives a somewhat mathematical discourse on the measurement of human survival, while Prof. Walter Stiles contributes an interesting account of the importance of "trace metals" (such as manganese, boron, zinc, and many others) to plant life; yet in more than minimal doses they are injurious. Mr. J. Z. Young records advances in our knowledge of the functions of the central nervous system, from which we learn that the concept of medullary "centres" is being refurbished on a more scientific basis. Prof. Le Gros Clark's article on "the anatomical basis of sensory experience" is complementary to Mr. Young's, and the two form an illuminating contribution. Mrs. Miles's account of the life-history of the wireworm (the larval stage of the click beetle, which takes four years to reach the chrysalis stage) and of the damage it does to agriculture is full of interest. Dr. M. L. Johnson's description of the malaria parasite and the extraordinary complexity of the problems presented by the mosquito is also of great interest at the present time.

This admirable little book is illustrated by plates and diagrams and provided with a glossary. If the editors can maintain the high standard they have achieved, *New Biology—II* will be well worth reading.

OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Recent Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. By Aleck W. Bourne, M.B., B.Ch., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., and Leslie H. Williams, M.D., M.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G. Sixth edition. (Pp. 358; illustrated. 18s.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1945.

Midwifery. Principles and Practice for Pupil Midwives, Teacher Midwives and Obstetric Dressers. By R. Christie Brown, M.B., M.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.O.G., and Barton Gilbert, M.D., F.R.C.S., M.R.C.O.G. Infants' Section by Richard H. Dobbs, M.D. Second edition. (Pp. 831; illustrated. 15s.) London: Edward Arnold and Co.

The sixth edition of *Recent Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology* is a worthy successor to its popular forebears. As stated in the preface there is much recorded in its pages which cannot strictly be classified as coming within recent advances, but the assessment of fact from fantasy is often the more authoritative for that very reason. The passing of time enables the new therapeutic measures of yesterday to be seen in their true perspective and reveals where emphasis has been wrongly placed. The sixth edition contains new chapters dealing with erythroblastosis, vitamin K, stillbirth and neonatal death, and nutrition in pregnancy. Of these particular mention must be made of the chapter on erythroblastosis, which as a lucid summary of the present state of knowledge could not be surpassed. In both ante-natal and post-natal care refreshing emphasis is given to the importance of considering the patient rather than the pelvis. Diet, posture, and exercise all receive the mention they deserve. In discussing cervical carcinoma the authors state that the Wertheim operation and all other operations for the surgical treatment of this condition have become obsolete. The subject is admittedly a difficult one, but it is possible that this is not the final pronouncement that *Recent Advances* will have to make on this subject. The best results so far obtained are not good, and better methods will in time be devised. They may be by irradiation, by surgery, or by a combination of both, possibly assisted by other and newer therapeutic measures. Until such time as the case is finally proven it would be regrettable if the technique of Bonney and his disciples were forgotten.

When a textbook written primarily for midwives is reprinted three times in four years and then is published in a second edition it needs no commendation from a reviewer. It must be gratifying for the authors of *Midwifery* to find that their somewhat unusual approach to the subject has been so widely and favourably received, for their book is no mere collection of facts to be memorized but an interesting and successful attempt to make the reader think logically and arrive at correct deductions from a basic minimum of factual knowledge. The new edition contains appropriate references to the Rh factor in its relation to erythroblastosis and to the dangers of blood transfusion. The work of Caldwell and Molloy on the classification of the pelvis is given considerable attention—possibly more than it deserves in a book of this type will be the comment of some obstetricians. Though there have been some slight additions to the section on breech presentation the authors still