
Book Reviews

EPILEPSIES IN CHILDHOOD; **Author: Niall O'Donohue; Pub.:** **Butterworth; Price: £16.00.**

This book, whose author is a Dublin paediatrician, presents a comprehensive review of epilepsy of childhood. It deals with the different varieties of seizures which are particular to childhood, and with seizures which, although a feature of childhood epilepsy, also occur in other age groups.

The international classification of Gastaut is used and both the pathogenesis and clinical features of the different types of epilepsy are described in considerable detail. The author combines an extensive review of the literature with his own considerable experience to convey clinical information. While the advantages of the E.E.G. in the investigation of childhood epilepsy are stated, the limitations of this investigation are stressed. The indications for other investigations are dealt with in logical sequence, and a particular reference is made to the C.T. scanner and its possible potential in helping to clarify further the complex nature of seizures.

Despite the limited knowledge available, due to the lack of good prospective studies of single drug treatment in epilepsy, the section on drugs presents a balanced review of the current therapeutic approach to the management of seizures. However, too much stress is sometimes given to therapeutic ranges, especially when it is doubtful that such ranges exist for some drugs, in particular, carbamazepine, sodium valproate and primidone.

The author stresses the importance of a balanced approach by both parents and teachers to the child with epilepsy, and stresses the variation of I.Q. levels found in children with epilepsy. The possible effect of drugs on I.Q. estimation is mentioned and it is stressed that many children with epilepsy, who do not have associated structural brain damage, have normal I.Q. levels.

The author is to be congratulated for this excellent review on all aspects of epilepsy in childhood. He has managed to convey the details of a complex problem in a clear unequivocal style.

Noel Callaghan.

TROPICAL MEDICINE AND PARASITOLOGY: Classic Investigations, vols. I and II; Edited by B. H. Kean, Kenneth Mott and Adair Russel; Cornell University Press, Ithica and London.

We tend to forget that many of the diseases which now form the bulk of medicine seen in the tropics, such as tuberculosis, rheumatic heart diseases, malnutrition, gastrointestinal infections, typhoid, typhus and severe measles, were common in these islands until comparatively recently and were not considered as tropical diseases. Tropical medicine as such was considered to be mainly concerned with conditions caused by tropical parasites. During the period 1850-1910, when the ocular microscope came into general use, most of these parasites were recognised and within 60 years the causes of malaria, amoebiasis, leishmaniasis, schistosomiasis, filarial-

sis, trypanosomiasis and ankylostomiasis were demonstrated.

The underlying concept of the present work is that knowledge of tropical medicine and medical parasitology is best obtained from those who made the original contributions, and these two volumes, the first on protozoology, the second on helminthology in the tropics, represent 15 years of dedication and skilful editing and translation. Quite apart from the interest of the subject matter, many of these papers are a pleasure to read. The quality of the writing, the lucidity of the prose and, especially in Manson's papers, the relentless logic, provide a refreshing contrast with modern medical jargon.

A feature which is well brought out is the degree of international cooperation prevalent in those times contrasting with modern nationalistic rivalries. Nevertheless, it is a source of satisfaction to find that Irishmen were not missing in this remarkable burst of medical research. The contribution of Donovan on leishmaniasis, Forde on clinical trypanosomiasis and O'Neill on onchocerciasis were each of importance.

It is perhaps too much to expect that these volumes will be in great demand by undergraduates struggling with their overinflated curricula. However, they will be essential reading for anyone interested in tropical medicine. The volumes are beautifully produced with excellent original illustrations and will provide a source not only of knowledge but of continuing pleasure.

W.

O'Brien.