BOOK REVIEWS


This book is one of the Oxford Series of Monographs on Medical Genetics which are designed not only to cover the genetics of individual specialities for clinicians and postgraduate students, but also to serve as reference sources for workers in the field of genetics itself. The authors are aware of the difficulties of classification, but they have adopted a system which is practical and easy to follow. They cover the great majority of orthopaedic conditions together with some others which are probably of greater interest to paediatricians and genetic counsellors. Some neurological conditions are included in this volume while others are more fully treated in a companion of the same series The Genetics of Neurological Disorders. After a brief clinical description the genetics of each condition is discussed and this is followed by the relevant references. There is in addition a very useful book list.

This is not a book which can be read from cover to cover as it is obviously intended for reference and as a source for further reading. In these aims the authors have succeeded very well indeed and have produced a work which should be available in all orthopaedic departments as well as in general medical libraries. It seems likely that this book will become as much a classic as that written in 1951 by the father of one of the authors—thus illustrating that there must be something in genetics after all.—Geoffrey Walker.


This book has been designed to acquaint physicians "who do not daily manage the complexities of trauma and disease of the hand with the basic principles of surgery of the hand". It aims to present practical recommendations to minimise defects and permit maximal recovery of function, especially mobility and sensitivity. There are many attractive features. The style and clarity are delightful, with a concise, pleasant presentation, many beautifully drawn and clearly labelled line diagrams and a total of 233 illustrations. Each chapter commences with an abstract emphasising principles, then lists pitfalls and finishes with a useful bibliography. There is a good chapter with clear instructions on the use of local anaesthesia for hand injuries. The fascinating last chapter, which is probably original in theme, illustrates example cases of hand injury and invites the reader to test his skill in diagnosis and treatment, a short discussion following on the next page.

There are some minor criticisms. The important principles and the frequency of disability after amputation of a digit are allocated only part of one page, while the sophisticated technique of a neurovascular island pedicle is extensively illustrated.

This is an outstanding book, short and erudite. I enjoyed reviewing it and would strongly recommend it for the library of any accident department. It contains much practical information and entirely succeeds as a ready source of knowledge for those in basic training in the surgery of the hand.—A. H. C. Ratliff.


This small book is claimed to be the first of its kind devoted to the subject and is the result of the author's experience as pathologist to the Birmingham Accident Hospital for twenty-five years. It is refreshing to find a writer who is obviously as well versed in the clinical and therapeutic aspects of his subject as in the morbid anatomy.

The book starts with a short chapter on the statistics of death after injury; subsequent chapters deal with the physiological and pathological reactions to injury, haemorrhage and plasma loss. The morphological appearances in individual organs are described and correlated with the metabolic changes which occur.

A complete chapter is devoted to fat embolism and in it the author argues his well-known views in favour of a "mechanical" rather than a "metabolic" origin of the fat. He rightly stresses the importance of the hypoxaemia which accompanies this syndrome.

Some of the graphs suffer from an over-abundance of detail, and one or two of the plates illustrating gross pathological specimens lack the necessary clarity and could have been omitted. These are minor criticisms of an excellent little volume which should be read by all who are involved in the treatment of trauma, be they surgeons, anaesthetists or pathologists.—R. Q. Crellin.


In this book some very good papers are devoted to describing the normal and abnormal anatomy of the foot and the treatment of some common deformities. A paper by Smith and Well describes an operation for spastic equinus that sounds most attractive. The insertion of the calcaneal tendon is brought forward about 2.5 centimetres to a new site on the dorsum of the body of the calcaneus, which decreases the power of the calf muscle without shortening it. The authors claim that equinus deformity does not recur with continued growth.

Other sections of the book have euphonious references to branches of the art such as palliative podiatrics and paediatric podiatrics. The papers that fascinated me were