

# Reviews of Recent Books



**The Premature Baby**, by V. Mary Crosse, Little, Brown, Boston, 1957, pp. 242, \$5.00.

Any book about prematures and prematurity, even a new edition of an old book, must be sufficiently different from the standard texts on the subject by Dunham, C. A. Smith or The American Academy of Pediatrics, to warrant publication. The fourth edition of Dr. Crosse's book is a very worth-while addition to the literature on the care of prematures.

The chapters, "Management and Care," "Hospital Care," "Home Care," "Clothing" and "Feeding," will be found equally valuable to nurses and doctors caring for these immature infants. The author gives statistical proof of the impracticality of handling a premature nursery in a hospital where there are fewer than 600 deliveries each year. The author's experience with the electrophrenic respirator in infants with pulmonary disease may encourage more people in this country to try its use for respiratory problems in the premature. Valuable "rule-of-thumb" formulae are given for such things as weight gain, feeding, fluid and drug calculation, obviously derived from her own extensive experience. While the feeding instructions with proprietary foods are of British manufacture, the principles are easily translated to similar American products.

The author's experience with the feeding of human milk to premature infants is one of the most impressive and best documented available today. Her evidence indicates the superiority of human milk in lowering both morbidity and mortality in the nursery and also in lowering morbidity when the child leaves the nursery. Previous objections that human milk contains too little calcium for the premature are disproved.

Certain controversial topics are dispensed with too dogmatically. For example, the rocking bed is dismissed with a word, face masks are listed as essential, frequent small feedings are recommended, and most physicians caring for prematures in this country would find that the author's recommendation for fluid therapy contains too much salt. A few inconsistencies are found in this volume. For example, in one section the author recommends early clamping of the cord in order to prevent pulmonary edema and later she recommends late clamping of the cord in order to prevent anemia. Likewise, in one section prothrombin deficiency is suggested as the cause of hemorrhagic disease of the newborn and later the presently acceptable factor VII is listed as the main cause of hemorrhagic disease. The author's use of transfusions when the hemoglobin is less than 7 g per 100 ml would be questioned in this country.

One wishes that the author had expressed her opinion of a few other controversial subjects, such as the use of ultraviolet lights in the prevention of infection in the nursery, or the use of prophylactic chemotherapy in infants born of infected mothers. A somewhat more detailed analysis of the physiology of the premature would make this book more helpful to students.

The chapter, "Complications Liable to Occur in the Premature Baby," contains a most thorough analysis of almost all of the problems in the care of prematures and is an up-to-date compendium of our handling of these problems today. This section alone should make this book extremely valuable.

This small book is very well written, lends to easy readability, and is a valuable addition to the pediatric literature. It should be available to all those desiring a better understanding of prematures.

L. A. BARNES

**Biochemistry of the Amino Acids**, by Alton Meister, Academic Press, New York, 1957, pp. 485, \$10.00.

Here is a book that should prove most welcome to biochemists, nutritionists, clinical investigators, and to all students in biochemistry and nutrition. It is written in an easily readable style. For instance, much of the information in the book is presented in historical sequence, which whets the reader's interest. Pertinent quotations from outstanding investigators add spice. The subject matter, which is well chosen, includes discussion of the role of the amino acids in nutrition, intermediary metabolism of the amino acids in normal and pathologic conditions as well as other general biochemical and physiologic considerations. The scope of the book is indicated by 2,859 references to the original literature; this greatly adds to its usefulness.

O. M. HELMER

**Cholesterin-Ernährung-Gesundheit** (Cholesterol, Nutrition, Health), by Wilhelm Halden and Ludwig Prokop, Urban & Schwarzenberg, Vienna, 1957, pp. 88, DM 9.

Cholesterol metabolism, diet, and their relationship to the etiology of coronary heart disease engage so many investigators and provoke so much controversy in the United States that this area of research may seem to be almost a domestic preserve. This little monograph by Professor Halden and Doctor Prokop is evidence, however, that others besides Americans are also intensely interested and, moreover, are well informed about the present state of knowledge. Halden and

Prokop have actually managed to provide a more complete and better balanced review than anything currently available in English. Though most of their discussion is based on American research, they cite enough European literature to remind us that our colleagues abroad have contributed much in the past and are again becoming active in this field.

In only 73 pages of text it is impossible, of course, to provide a critical discussion of the whole subject, or even of the major developments of the past decade; nor is the time yet ripe for final conclusions about some of the problems of greatest concern. But the authors have managed to pack into a small space a great deal of information that will be useful to the general medical public as well as to the research workers. The organization of the material into many short sections and a liberal provision of tables and graphs make for easy intelligibility for anyone with only a modest knowledge of German. There is a minimum of detailed argument about pros and cons and a maximum of simple presentation of facts. The whole treatment is conservative yet permeated with the authors' realization that in this field and its burgeoning development there may be profound significance for the future public health. A. K.

**Alcoholism**, edited by George N. Thompson, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1957, pp. 536, \$9.50.

For those interested, not only in the problem of the alcoholic as an individual, but also in the situations he creates for society and the physician, the Thompson monograph should find a valued place.

The eight chapters are written by 11 outstanding individuals long recognized for their research efforts and the reporting thereof. The book of more than five hundred pages presents a mass of material in condensed form which, if expanded, might possibly have taken two or three volumes of similar size. Chapter titles in a book review make for uninteresting reading as a rule, but presenting the gist of each section title in this review, I believe, will give a bird's eye view of the important phases covered.

The social and public health aspects are covered by Hirsh in a 100-page treatise. Among the subjects discussed are nosology; statistics; alcohol and women, marriage, divorce, delinquency, promiscuity, venereal disease, crime, and traffic accidents; and "A. A." Harger, the "inventor" of the Drunkometer, discusses the pharmacology of alcohol in "good-reading" yet comprehensive fashion. This is followed by a well-done discussion of the pathology of alcoholism of Edmonson and his associates. The chapter by Himwich ably embraces alcohol and cerebral physiology while Olsen presents current views on the role of alcoholism in internal medicine, stressing a variety of clinical conditions caused or aggravated by alcohol. He admonishes that alcohol should be regarded as a habit-forming drug; a narcotic, rather than a stimulant. Nielsen presents the neurologic aspects of alcoholism, and Thompson, the editor of the book, discusses the psychiatry of

alcoholism. The neurologic, psychiatric, and medical aspects of the clinical discussion perhaps could have been considerably enlarged upon to the benefit of the clinician. Because of the influence of alcohol upon the brain a worth-while contribution is the chapter by Marinacci on electroencephalography in alcoholism. Sample E.E.G.'s are presented from representative case reports. That chronic alcoholism and hepatic cirrhosis are definitely associated is regarded as reasonably conclusive. Therapy in neurologic and psychiatric problems is briefly discussed, and the drugs used in treatment of alcoholism and their presumed pharmacologic action are reviewed.

The importance of and the frequency of the occurrence of malnutrition in chronic alcoholism might have been stressed and enlarged upon to a greater extent. This well-documented survey can, however, answer the needs of many, other than physicians, for factual information on this serious problem as it influences the patient and his community. C. G. WEIGAND

**Alcoholism. Basic Aspects and Treatment**, edited by H. E. Himwich, Am. Assn. Advancement of Science, Washington, D. C., 1957, pp. 220, \$5.75.

The subject of alcoholism is so important in modern life that any intelligent appraisal by qualified experts deserves careful consideration. This applies to this publication which presents a symposium held under the auspices of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in co-operation with the American Psychiatric Association and the American Physiological Society, at the meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, December, 1955.

The complexity of the problem is presented from different viewpoints in 19 papers. There is a study of the depressing effects of alcohol on the oxygen consumption of brain slices; a discussion of the pathway of alcohol metabolism; chapters on vitamin deficiencies and the effects of vitamin intake on carbohydrate metabolism under conditions of alcohol administration. Among the papers dealing with the therapeutic aspects are those dealing with new drugs that have recently been recommended. It is interesting that several authors reported essentially similar successful experiences with different tranquilizing agents. The editor's (Himwich) summary is particularly valuable. Although the problems of alcohol remain largely unsolved, it is encouraging to see such valiant attempts at its solution.

S. O. W.

**Soybeans for Health, Longevity, and Economy**, by Philip S. Chen, The Chemical Elements, South Lancaster, Mass., 1956, pp. 241, \$3.00.

Soybeans have been recognized by nutritionists as a valuable contribution to the food economy, and their increased use in the American diet has been encouraged sporadically. This book represents a highly enthusiastic appeal for including soybeans in the dietary. Many recipes utilizing soy products should be of interest to



the homemaker. Information concerning the cultivation and preservation of soybeans, and some of the technics for processing soybeans for the various food products is conveniently placed for reference.

The nutritive contributions which soybeans make are discussed in considerable detail. The work of many investigators is cited, but unfortunately the author has not always listed the references. The reader who would wish to have further detail about specific studies would experience some difficulty in locating the sources.

Broad conclusions are frequently drawn from the data of experiments conducted under highly specific circumstances. The lay person especially is unable to make judgments concerning these statements, and thus food faddism is encouraged. For example, liberal use of soybeans is said to "insure the individual user health, longevity, and economy" (p. iv), a claim which is obviously too broad. To compare percentage concentrations of calcium in liquid milk and in soybeans (p. 26) without relating them to the amounts of the respective foods which might be consumed daily is misleading. The statements that choline prevents "certain types of kidney damage and arteriosclerosis" (p. 35) and that pantothenic acid has "reported ability to cure certain types of gray hair" (p. 35) fail to make clear to the reader that these deficiency symptoms are the results of severe dietary lacks in certain animal species. Illustrations pertaining to the cost of nutrients, such as the one for fat equivalents (Fig. 5, p. 17), are misleading in that the foods used for comparison are not, in many instances, those upon which the diet depends for the nutrient in question; for example, bread, dried peas, and corn meal are not significant sources of fat nor should their values in the diet be judged on the fat content.

A chapter on soybeans and disease is seriously misleading. The opening paragraph of this chapter includes these statements: ". . . 'it (soybean) also prevents or cures many of the common diseases. . . . Among these common diseases may be mentioned coronary disease, arteriosclerosis, diabetes, intestinal disturbances, and diseases due to food allergy" (p. 54). Many readers may be encouraged by the statements included in this chapter to substitute injudicious tampering with their dietaries for the professional advice which their state of health may require. Others, whose primary motive is profit, will use these statements to justify the sale of soy products at exorbitant costs.

The author is, undoubtedly, sincerely interested in a more important place for soybeans in the world dietary at low cost. However, it is to be regretted that many physicians and nutritionists will find it necessary to carefully interpret the contents of this book to their patients.

C. H. ROBINSON

**The Physiology and Biochemistry of Lactation**, by S. J. Folley, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, London, 1956, pp. 153, \$3.75.

A series of lectures given by the author at the Collège

de France in 1953, and published the following year as "*Recherches Recentes sur la Physiologie et la Biochimie de la Sécrétion Lactée*" has now been translated and brought up to date. The English title is misleadingly comprehensive, since the contents are limited very largely to the results of recent research at the National Institute for Research in Dairying at Reading, England. Those aspects of lactation discussed are: the hormonal basis of mammary gland development in a range of species from mice to cows, the initiation of milk secretion and its hormonal maintenance, including recent information on adrenal and thyroid effects, the physiology of milk ejection and the biosynthesis of milk fat, lactose, and protein. Too concentrated for easy fire-side reading, this review is nevertheless clearly presented and there is a valuable bibliography. The many illustrations are excellent.

Although primarily intended for physiologists and biochemists in the veterinary field, the author in his preface, expresses the hope that the book will also be useful to medical students. In fact, it will be of little practical value for the doctor and it is perhaps a pity that the opportunity was not taken to enlarge its scope to include what is known of human lactation.

F. E. HYTEN

**Health Yearbook, 1956**, edited by Oliver E. Byrd, Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif., 1957, pp. 278, \$5.00.

The editor of this annual Health Yearbook, now in its 14th edition, undertakes each year the stupendous task of screening the vast literature in the fields of public health, medicine, and the allied sciences. Dr. Byrd, in the preface to this edition, states that he read "slightly fewer than 2,000 articles in well over 300 different health journals. . . .". From this he made "a final selection of 254 articles" which he considers to be "a representative sample of the published health literature for the year 1956."

The editor has condensed into readable and good reference form much that unquestionably is useful for public health workers for whom the work is apparently intended. This includes a breakdown of vital statistics, socio-economic factors in health and disease, advances in the mental health area, progress in the diagnosis and conquering of infectious disease, chronic and degenerative disorders; narcotics, alcoholism, etc. Résumés of available health services are presented and the concluding chapters are devoted to health within the family, school, industry, community, and on the international scene.

Throughout the years of its publication the book unquestionably has proved of merit in providing keys to current developments in the fields it represents. The ultimate value of such a book is based upon the reader's use of these keys.

C. I. P.



**Practical Nutrition**, by Alice B. Peyton, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1957, pp. 409, \$3.60.

The stated purpose of this book is to "fill a need for a simple and practical presentation of nutrition, diet therapy, and food economics." The book has been written primarily for students in practical nursing, and secondarily for homemakers and other lay persons who wish authoritative information. The author has had considerable experience in teaching at the secondary and college level and is especially qualified for teaching nutrition to nursing students.

The goals to be realized in the nutrition education of practical nurses have not been, for the most part, clearly defined. Therefore, to write an appropriate text in dietetics for these students is a challenge not easily met. This book appears to be largely a condensation of material already presented in a number of texts used for professional nursing students. This approach is not wholly successful inasmuch as the selection has not always been limited to that which the practical nurse might be expected to use. As a consequence, matters important for the student are too briefly presented. For example, the practical nurse might be expected to prepare the patient's meals in the home situation; even though a cookbook is available, she would need some guidance in cooking for one (or two) and in making the adaptations for certain therapeutic diets. This book might have amplified such important material perhaps at the expense of some of the discussion of symptoms, etc.

The author is to be commended for the emphasis placed on the dangers of food faddism, and for the helpful section on budgeting. The information in the book appears to be correct, but there are a number of ambiguous statements and inconsistencies which detract from the book as a whole. For example, the Basic Seven food grouping is emphasized throughout, but the table quoted on pages 71-74 does not follow this grouping and is likely to confuse the reader. The rearrangement of the Food Exchange Lists is unfortunate; for example, in the meat list, the reader is informed

(page 197) that 3 oz is an average serving of meat, but the author proceeds to give equivalents for 2 oz. Statements relating to rickets (page 58) are misleading in that calcium deficiency has not been an important etiologic factor in this country. The sodium restricted diet does not take into consideration the newer tables of sodium values published by the National Research Council in 1954.

Study questions at the end of the book might have been more conveniently placed at the end of each chapter. The 11-page list of supplementary references is unnecessary since it is, for the most part, a listing of chapter numbers of books already listed on pages 364-367. With a selection of reference books available, any instructor or student can select the supplementary readings as needed.

In spite of these few criticisms, it is recognized by this reviewer that this book represents a worthwhile step in the direction of the more satisfactory nutrition education of the practical nursing student.

C. ROBINSON

Books received for review by THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION are acknowledged in this column. As far as practicable, those of special interest are selected, as space permits, for a more extensive review.

*The Functions and Education of Medical Record Personnel* by the Study Group of the Graduate School of Public Health of the University of Pittsburgh, Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1957, pp. 78, \$2.00.

*Technique of Fluid Balance* by Geoffrey H. Tovey, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1957, pp. 100, \$2.50.

*Medical Writing (third edition)* by Morris Fishbein, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1957, pp. 262, \$7.00.

*Calcium Metabolism* by J. T. Irving, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1957, pp. 177, \$2.75.

*Biochemistry (second edition)* by Abraham Cantarow and Bernard Schepartz, W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia 1957, pp. 867, \$12.00.

