BOOK REVIEWS


Recent researches on the effects of the anterior pituitary gland and the hormones of the suprarenal cortex in collagen diseases have aroused a widespread interest shared by the general physician and the endocrine specialist alike. In recent years interest has moved from the classical description of the known endocrine diseases to a study of the part played by the endocrine glands in health and disease and the possible endocrine aetiology of diseases with doubtful or unknown aetiology.

Dr. Ucko has attempted to co-ordinate our present knowledge of the endocrine diseases and their diagnosis with a systematic discussion of the involvement of endocrine factors in the physiology and pathology of the organism as a whole and in diseases which are not primarily of endocrine origin. He also discusses endocrine influences, known and probable, on the various organs and structures of the body. The first part of the book, about 300 pages, is devoted to clinical findings and the endocrine influences on different body structures, and on the mechanism of the major events of life. Signs, symptoms, and differential diagnosis are set out in detail, and, where possible, arranged in tabular form. This system of regional clinical findings is an excellent one and saves time for the busy physician in search of a particular sign or syndrome.

The second part of the book deals with the physiology and disorders of the endocrine glands. A separate chapter is devoted to each gland, and the modern laboratory tests used as an aid to diagnosis are included.

Certain sections, particularly those dealing with the adrenal cortex and the anterior pituitary gland might with advantage be expanded. The illustrations are excellently reproduced, and photographs of typical cases clearly bring out many points in the text, so that we hope that they will be more numerous in the next edition. Finally, there is an excellent bibliography.

G. N. MYERS.


The division of Medicine into specialties is one of the problems of the times, even cardiologists have their misgivings when they find themselves breeding a series of specialists for each of the three standard and most of the unipolar leads.

The comparatively new specialty of physical medicine belongs properly to a somewhat older hierarchy than that which relates to particular parts or organs of the body. Just as the specialties of radiology and pathology depend upon certain diagnostic techniques involving more capital equipment than can be carried in a top hat, so physical medicine is a specialty depending ultimately upon a particular therapeutic technique and apparatus: it is paralleled by surgery—one of the oldest subdivisions in medicine. It is a little surprising, when the physicians called the use of physic "iatrochemical medicine", that the surgeons did not call themselves "iatrophysical specialists", since surgery is the application to medicine of the mechanical physics which guide the carpenter and the plumber (not forgetting the plumber's mate). Since those days, the connotation of physical medicine as compared with chemical medicine has undergone considerable change, but its province is still the whole of medicine and in particular those diseases and conditions that can be ameliorated by the simpler physical devices, excluding the use of the knife and chisel, and stopping short at about 2,100 Ångström units on the spectrum, which then becomes the responsibility of the radiotherapist and of the atomic physicist.

In the old days, the techniques used in physiotherapy were limited to about five—ultra-violet light, heat in various forms, active and passive movements, massage, and electrical stimulation. The common habit of young house physicians of sending patients
for "some physiotherapy", although never condoned and often condemned, might have been excused, especially since undergraduate instruction in this subject was and perhaps still is in many centres almost non-existent. But physiotherapy, or rather, physical medicine, may mean now anything from ultrasonic disintegration to psychogenic rehabilitation. The conditions treated have correspondingly increased in number, although it is probably true that fibrositis, and what the Americans call "psychogenic rheumatism", still make up the biggest single group in the average clinic. Thus it may be concluded that physical medicine is not just a euphemism for physiotherapy.

These reflections have been aroused by a welcome and overdue addition on "Physical Medicine" to Churchill's "Recent Advances Series". This volume, edited by Francis Bach, with 490 pages and 38 contributors, does not attempt to survey the whole field, but covers almost all the new ground which had been broken in the last 20 years, and emphasizes the crops with the most economically useful yield. These include Rehabilitation (A. R. Thompson and F. M. Ling), Re-employment and resettlement (John Arthur and Norah Hill), the School-child (E. H. Jebens), the Army (J. W. T. Patterson), and Industry (Katherine Williams). The editor contributes a characteristically thoughtful and thought-provoking preface on the scope and range of physical medicine, stressing the two main directions of advance, the development and use of instruments of precision, and the organization of rehabilitation. Throughout the book stress is laid on what is termed in several places the "holistic approach".

The first four chapters deal with selected aspects of physics, anatomy, and physiology—including an exposition of the quantum concept and its relevance (Mendelssohn), a chapter on posture, and an account of the blood supply to the muscles (Blomfield). There then follows an excellent chapter on electrodiagnosis (Bauwens and Richardson), chapters on hydrotherapy, massage and manipulation, and home and occupational therapy. There is some repetition here and there, e.g. on electromyography, presumably difficult to avoid because of the collective authorship.

Guthrie Smith's chapter on remedial work and assisted exercises is a very valuable account of a field to which she has made a major contribution. It is surprising, however, that no mention is apparently made, here or elsewhere, of Delorme's careful work on progressive resistance exercises. As almost the only research prosecuted on the effects of exercise as carried out in physiotherapy departments, and as a model which might well be followed, this work deserves much wider recognition. Much mention is made of research in physical medicine (vide preface), but until the recent war it was almost unknown for the effects of any physiotherapeutic procedure to be adequately evaluated, most of the procedures being merely "thought to be useful". The war stimulated several useful studies, such as that of the prevention of muscle atrophy by electrical stimulation, and some account of army research is given by Patterson in Chap. 25. By and large, however, the critical evaluation of methods of physical treatment in medicine is rare compared with the careful evaluation that what we might call "chemical" methods commonly entail.

The next section shows the application of physical medicine in various clinical fields e.g. rheumatism (Bach), orthopaedics (Girdlestone, Crisp, and Smart), and neuropsychiatry (Sandifer). The remaining sections deal with the organization of a department, public health aspects of rehabilitation and resettlement (particularly valuable), and the training in physical medicine of doctors (Kersley), and of physiotherapists (McAllister).

The book is well produced and there is a list of references (not always alphabetically arranged) to eleven of the 32 chapters. The reviewer particularly commends Fig. 60 for its refreshing realism, and most of the 93 illustrations are clear and helpful; Figs 43 and 44 may commend themselves to crossword addicts, though there are unfortunately neither clues in the text nor a solution in the back.

This will be found a useful book in many spheres besides that of physical medicine, and can be highly recommended to students and practitioners of that specialty.

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Recent Advances in Physical Medicine

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