BOOK REVIEWS


Had Dr. Cyriax in this book confined his work to the subject matter of his sub-title, he would have performed a valuable service, for there are interesting points in his method of physical examination and in his elucidation of disorders of muscular function and of peri-articular lesions. As it is, we find this work one of the most exasperating that has come our way. We must admit at the outset that we were disturbed by the publisher's note that "this is the first book in the world literature to describe a valid system for examining in isolation each function of joint, ligament, bursa, dura mater, nerve sheath, muscle, and tendon: the criteria distinguishing each disorder are set out in detail". There is no place for such hyperbole in present-day medical publication, and, of course, such extravagant statements are in no way borne out by a careful study of the book itself. This work is verbose, repetitive, and illogical. Examination, diagnosis, and treatment are hopelessly muddled in sequence. Although the work is concerned with soft tissue lesions, much time is spent upon the pathology and treatment of bone and joint disorders, with most unsatisfactory conclusions. Don Quixote-like, Dr. Cyriax tilts at imaginary enemies and exposes himself pitifully.

His writing contains many inconsequential asides, as may be seen in his discussion of obsolete and future treatments for intervertebral disk lesions and the treatment of other lumbar disorders. Dr. Cyriax suggests, as a new idea, "a method of arthrodesis using a wedge of bone introduced between two spinous processes"; a method that has been in use in many hospitals throughout the world for some years! We do not know who is the Debyere, to whom he has ascribed anterior arthrodesis by the abdominal approach. As far as we know B. H. Burns was the first to carry out this operation, and amongst other advocates have been Mercer of Edinburgh and Merle d'Aubigné of Paris. Throughout this book inadequate recognition has been given to orthopaedic surgeons for their contributions to physical medicine. Furthermore, although many authorities are quoted, there is no bibliography.

Dr. Cyriax without doubt is an amusing and forceful teacher of physical medicine, but in this book he has done nothing to sustain his argument for the establishment of a department of orthopaedic medicine, which doubtless would include the manifold medical interests of diseases such as bone and joint tuberculosis, osteomyelitis, infantile paralysis, metabolic disorders of the skeleton, and even rheumatoid arthritis, subjects which from an orthopaedic and medical point of view are in his book only very slightly touched upon. One realizes that none of these are purely soft tissue lesions, but then neither are the intervertebral disk lesions about which so much of the book expands.

Dr. Cyriax has missed a great opportunity. He had something important to give in teaching a proper method of physical examination, and his book would have been valuable if, a quarter of its present size, he had eliminated the nonsense.

Norman Capener.


This short monograph may be regarded as a reasonably comprehensive account of orthodox views on ankylosing spondylitis. One of the author's main aims is in publishing it—and we must congratulate him on this—was to make a plea for its early diagnosis as the one hope of preventing chronic invalidism. It is strange to find him stating that this disease is known as "juvenile spondylitis" in England, but he makes thorough amends for this error by rejecting the American view that the condition is a form of rheumatoid arthritis. Each chapter contains a resume of modern methods of diagnosis and treatment, etc., comparing them with the author's findings in 25 of his own cases. Although aware of the limitations of cortisone, he regards it as one of our strongest therapeutic weapons. It is a pity there is the odd serious mistake such as the statement on p. 30 that rheumatoid arthritis is commoner in males. Photographs of some typically advanced cases are included, but the X-ray reproductions are generally poor, and it is surprising to find no index. On the whole, however, the book is fairly well balanced and it is easy to read.

Paul B. Woolley.


The primary purpose of this book, as stated in the preface, has been to emphasize the everyday responsibilities and functions of the physician who cares for arthritic and rheumatic patients. That this aim has not been fully achieved is evident from the fact that degenerative joint disease is dealt with in four pages. The chapter on basic and comparative physiology of joints forms a useful and adequate introduction to the subject; included in this is a discussion on the composition of joint fluid such as is rarely found outside the comprehensive works on the subject. It is surprising, however, that no mention...