BOOK REVIEWS

THE NURSING COUPLE

M. P. Middlemore

(Hamish Hamilton, London. 1941. Pp. 195. 7s. 6d.)

This essentially popular book views breast-feeding from the psychological standpoint. A timely attack is made on the artificial régimes often imposed on "nursing couples" and a plea is made for a more understanding consideration of each case. Unfortunately the study is based on a small number of cases. No detailed reports are given from which to assess the validity of the elaborate behaviouristic classification. The biological support for certain interpretations may be questioned. However, though patchy, the book is quite readable, and may encourage in the mother a sane approach to nursing.

DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. DESCRIBED FOR PRACTITIONERS AND STUDENTS

F. M. R. Walshe


Evidence of the author's success in producing a lucid and simple text-book meeting the needs of student and practitioner comes in the early exhaustion of the first edition. The appreciation and use of this admirable work must considerably further the study and practice of medicine to-day. When publishers are experiencing difficulty in getting supplies it is heartening to know that a large second edition with improvements and extended text has been possible. Among the improvements are new plates and an expansion of the sections on organization and symptoms of the sensory, visual, and speech functions, head and spinal injuries, and acute infections of the nervous system.

The chapter on space occupying lesions of the cranium in its amended form gives a simple description of the mechanisms which bring about a rise in intracranial pressure and rightly emphasizes the fact that the relative role of each varies in different cases. Many readers, however, might rightly carp at a simplification which assigns local symptoms of brain tumour to (1) tissue anoxia, and (2) tissue destruction. However appealing a suggestion it may be, that the main cause of disorder of function is impaired blood supply has yet to be proven, and it seems to us this reservation might well be pointed out in the text.

From the recasting the section on the pituitary emerges in none too laudable a form. The short account of the physiology of the gland ignores points which are essential to the practitioner and student for an understanding of the disorders of the pituitary described. The range of its hormonal influence is inadequately indicated. For example, its part in sugar metabolism, water and chloride balance and thyroid activity is not mentioned. Repeated recourse to the ugly word hypopituitarism does nothing to help crystallize ideas on the various types of altered function seen clinically. In a book which presents such a high standard of lucidity and adequacy shortcomings of this sort deserve comment. So too mention must be made of the failure to indicate the use of chloride in the treatment of bromide intoxication. The student should be explicitly told that treatment for the bulk of cases consists of common salt orally with fluids.
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J Neurol Psychiatry 1941 4: 296
doi: 10.1136/jnnp.4.3-4.296

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