
Paul Kallós, Hälsingborg

D. O. Harrington: The Visual Fields. A Textbook and Atlas of Clinical Perimetry. C. V. Mosby Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1956. 327 pages, 234 figures, 9 color plates. % 16.00. The author is ophthalmological consultant to the Departments of Neurology and Neurological Surgery at the University of California, and hence his textbook and atlas put most emphasis on disorders of the visual pathways, but also the visual field defects of lesions of the fundus oculi and the perimetry of glaucoma have been completely reviewed. “One picture is worth ten thousand words”. This sentence is nowhere more applicable than in a textbook of this type. Illustrative material is essential to the understanding of visual field interpretation and is of highest quality in this book. The pictures are almost entirely original and have been drawn from the author’s own case records. Quantitative perimetry is the method advocated throughout the book, but the information to be gained from less exacting methods is not neglected.
The value of simple methods for visual field examination is stressed. “It is my sincere conviction that elaborate machinery is unnecessary for adequate perimetry. In short, the man behind the perimeter is more important than the equipment he uses.”

The book is strictly clinical in its approach. Furthermore, the correlation of visual field interpretation with anatomy is of great help in the clinical work.

This new textbook is highly recommended. The wide practical experience of the author adds authority to his statements. The book will prove helpful to all peri-metrists, especially in the field of neurologic disorders. Ophthalmologists, neurologists and neurosurgeons will thus all find it of great practical value in every day practice.

Åke Arén, Malmö.

W. J. Quarks van Ufford (Editor): The Therapy of Bronchial Asthma.

This book contains the Proceedings of the “International Round Table Friendship Meeting of Allergologists” held at Utrecht, Netherlands, in 1955. The main subject was asthma, the various aspects of which were discussed by an international group in connection with a number of short introductory reviews, presented by experts. B. N. Halprin (Paris) reviewed the “Physiopathological Mechanism of Paroxysmal Attacks of Asthma and Their Treatment with Drugs”. In this stimulating review Halprin stresses the dominant role of bronchial muscle contraction and mucosal edema in the pathogenesis of the acute asthmatic attack. Changes in glandular secretion and ciliary function are important contributing factors. Halprin has “no hesitation in stating that theophylline is the queen of antiasthmatics”. Antihistaminics are not useful in asthma therapy. A number of reviews and discussion-notes concern the problem of specific desensitization. K. Maunsell’s (London) paper on “House Dust Allergens and Hypo-sensitisation” is an outstanding treatise on this important subject. In my opinion, A. W. Frantcland’s (London) short note on a controlled trial carried out by him in 200 cases of so-called infective asthma is one of the most important contributions to the present volume. “The patients were kept under observation for one year and given general supportive treatment. It was found that regular injections of an autogenous bacterial vaccine produced no greater benefit to asthmatic patients than similar injections of carbolic saline. Over 50 per cent obtained benefit from the treatment.” Another very interesting paper was presented by D. A. Williams (Cardiff) on “Choice and Change of Profession” of asthmatics, in which important but widely neglected social problems are thoroughly and expertly discussed. Many other problems of asthma therapy were elucidated in the discussions by L. Businco, J. Duchaine, H. A. E. van Dishoeck, W. J. Quarles van Ufford, K. Hansen, J. Tabart, H. S. Tuft, P. J. van der Werff and other specialists. However, it should perhaps be mentioned that some of the other contributions are of minor importance and that a number of papers contain so many errors of style and construction as to be hardly intelligible in parts.

Paul Kallós, Helsingborg.

J. C. Meakins (Editor): The Practice of Medicine. C. V. Mosby, St.Louis, Mo., 1956. 1916 p., 318 fig. $ 16.00.

Opinions concerning general v. specialized practice of medicine are very different; furthermore, specialists representing some of the major fields, such as internal medicine or surgery, are often persistent and active opponents of «minor» specialities, such as endocrinology, allergy, or thorax surgery. The Editor of the present volume is undoubtedly in favour of integration. The undergraduates should not, according to him, “be taught by a group of specialists” but by a
professor of medicine, who is able to discuss all the fundamental concepts at the bedside. This professor of medicine does not – according to Dr. Meakins – have to take the results of laboratory workers “too seriously at times when these do not conform with the whole pattern of the functional derangement or syndrome. In fact, many symptom-complexes cannot be proved to have a factual physiologic, anatomic, biochemical or psychologic basis. All of these may contribute to the common end, but they must be integrated to apply to the individual as a composite being”.

In an attempt to promote the efforts of this teacher in medicine and those of his students, Dr. Meakins edited this giant volume, with the aid of 24 associate-editors and 88 contributors. In the opinion of the reviewer it is somewhat contradictory to claim integration and at the same time take advantage of specialists to such a great extent. However, “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”.

The present volume covers medicine in its entirety. The short contributions contain a wealth of facts and useful information. Some sections, such as “Bacterial Infections” (edited by L. Weinstein), “Diseases due to Viruses” (D. M. Horstmann et al.) “Diseases of the Pulmonary Parenchyma” (A. L. Barach et al.) and “Diseases of the Heart” (J. W. Hurst et al.) are very well planned and in spite of their brevity quite comprehensive. Other parts of the book, for instance that on “Disorders of Metabolism and Nutrition” or that on “Diseases of the Ductless Glands” seem to the present reviewer too brief. It is extremely difficult or perhaps impossible to explain the complicated metabolic and endocrine processes and interrelationships in such a short space and to remain at the same time entirely intelligible.

The readers of these Archives are specialists, and it is of interest to them to know that 62 pages of the volume are devoted to “The Allergic States”. This section is edited by Dr. B. Rose. He includes some of the so-called collagen diseases in this section (disseminated lupus erythematosus, scleroderma and dermatomyositis); this is disputable having regard to the uncertain etiology of these conditions. Rose gives a short history of allergy in which the names of Richet, v. Pirquet, Schick or Dale do not appear. Then, he explains the most important experimental and clinical facts and defines the terms. According to Rose hay fever, asthma and urticaria are “reversible” allergic states, characterized by “the rapidity of onset of symptoms and the complete reversibility of the changes induced”. It is perhaps unwise to stress the significance of the reversibility of symptoms too far. An immediate skin-reaction (wheal and flare) for instance, is not completely reversed when the clinical signs and symptoms subside. The site of the reaction shows long lasting histological changes and an impaired reactivity: such sites show very often a “flare-up” weeks or months later, if a sufficient amount of the specific allergen is administered parenterally. In experiments on allergic guinea-pigs it can easily be demonstrated that the mild and transitory asthmatic attack, produced by a short (1-2 minutes) inhalation of the aerosolized allergen, causes histological changes, which can be detected weeks or months after the attack in spite of immediate clinical recovery. All the other allergic states are collected by Rose under the heading “Bacterial allergy (delayed forms)”. Such a division does not seem logical to the reviewer. The usual and accepted classification: immediate and delayed allergic reactions, is clear cut and practical. The logical counter-part to “reversible” allergic states would be “irreversible” and not bacterial or delayed ones. Furthermore, one of the most important and typical delayed allergic syndromes, contact dermatitis, has nothing to do with bacteria or bacterial allergy. Rose’s explanation of the patho-genesis of collagen diseases is hypothetical and has no place in a textbook. The statement that lupus erythematosus cells appear in cases of
penicillin allergy or can be produced by anti-leukocyte-serum is not acceptable. LE-cells are pathognomonic for lupus erythematosus. In cases of severe allergic diseases and under the influence of anti-leukocyte-serum different manifestations of nucleophagocytosis occur*. The “Methods of Detection of Allergy and their Evaluation” are expertly discussed by S.C. Bukantz, and so is “Asthma” by J. M. Sheldon, R. G. Lowell and K. B. Matthews.


The contributions by F. C. Lowell on “Drug Allergy” and “Gastro-intestinal Allergy” are excellent. In the chapter on drug allergy, however, there is an erroneous statement, according to which in cases of drug induced acute thrombocytopenic purpura “the reaction is associated with presence of an antibody in the serum which causes agglutination of thrombocytes in vitro in the presence of complement”. In fact, platelet agglutination occurs in the presence of the causative drug and antibodies but in the absence of complement. Complement, if present, causes lysis*. “Angio-neurotic Edema, Urticaria and Serum Reactions” are discussed by Rose. The classical monograph of v. Pirquet and Schick on “Serum-Sickness” is neither quoted nor included in the bibliography. Rose stresses very rightly that the percentage of patients in whom the etiology of attacks of angioedema “can be clearly identified is small in the hand of most observers”. The first of the few references belonging to this chapter refers, however, to a paper by E. Bruun, according to whom in 73 (55%) of 132 patients with angioedema “an unquestionable allergic etiology could be demonstrated” and in a further 24 (18%) “an allergic etiology was presumed, but could not be verified with certainty”. The discrepancy between the statement of Rose and these results is not explained.

Undoubtedly, this textbook has its merits as a source of information in many different fields of medicine. One cannot recommend it so highly, however, as a text book for teachers and students. Integration in medicine is highly desirable but must be based on thorough knowledge and understanding of anatomy, histology, physiology, biochemistry, pathology and pharmacology, and not on short and sometimes fragmentary descriptions of diseases. Paul Kallós, Helsingborg.