
This booklet records a lecture given at the Institute of Orthopaedics, and repeated at other institutes of the British Postgraduate Medical Federation, to help its students in the preparation of papers. Of great experience, Dr Bett gives much guidance in searching the literature, arrangement, quotations, illustrations, references, presentation and style. This useful introduction to a large subject is commended to all prospective medical writers.—H. Jackson Burrows.


Miss Dunson’s book, “The Educability of Cerebral Palsied Children,” is written primarily for those directly interested in this highly complex educational problem, but it has an appeal to a much wider professional and lay circle. In considerable detail, Miss Dunson has reviewed the etiology, classification and complications of cerebral palsy with particular reference to the influence that the two main forms have on intellectual development. The high incidence of mental retardation among those with cerebral palsy, coupled with the frequently associated defect of speech, sight and hearing, and occasionally also of emotional stability, retards normal scholastic progress, so that the task presented to the teacher is often formidable.

In a report of this type and scope, it would be unusual if several controversial points did not arise. There are several conclusions which will not receive a universal acceptance. 1) Miss Dunson suggests that the dual-purpose schools have failed to justify their claims. Is such a conclusion justifiable on the evidence produced? Failure by one, or even two, schools to show appreciable improvement in their pupils may justify a demand for the trial of different methods, but hardly a condemnation of the entire project. In all dual-purpose schools, the staff must be selected with due regard to personality and temperament as well as to educational attainment, since the work of a school can be ruined by lack of collaboration or understanding between teacher, therapist and scholar. It is only when interest, sympathy and understanding exist between pupils and staff members that the best results will be obtained. The child with cerebral palsy is sensitive to atmosphere, so that strife, or lack of interest in the staff, breeds similar indifference in the pupil. 2) The view that “Among cerebrally palsied children, formal education is unlikely to produce any very satisfactory response, if begun much before the age of about nine years” will not be accepted by many teachers, nor will the experienced orthopaedist agree that physical instruction should hold the centre of the platform until the child is nine, to be replaced in part, or in whole, thereafter by academic pursuits. To accept such a conclusion is to ignore the decided physical improvement that does occur pari passu with intellectual progress, even in the absence of all physiotherapeutic care. Several years ago Perlstein drew attention to the non-physical benefits of physical therapy, and, more recently, Carlson has shown that in a somewhat similar manner there are benefits to be obtained from education that lie outside the academic field. The treatment of cerebral palsy is prolonged and calls for many remedies, each contributing its quota to the betterment of the child, one taking precedence over another only where special needs demand it. 3) Many speech therapists of wide experience hesitate to dogmatise so decidedly on the influence of laterality and eye dominance in its effect on the development of speech and training. Other dual-purpose schools in Britain have not been able to support these views of Miss Dunson which were first suggested by Phelps. It would have been of interest to know on what number and series of tests Miss Dunson determined laterality and how long each case was observed. She rightly divides eye dominance into three groups of right, left and intermediate; yet, when handedness is considered, she ignores an ambidextrous group. This is surprising, because handedness and the ability to concentrate and so benefit from instruction are so often related: the child with a “butterfly attention” is frequently ambidextrous. Although Miss Dunson’s figures indicate the number of children reviewed under each section, she does not state clearly in the text the basis of selection. As the number of cases varies from chapter to chapter, one assumes that in each the children were selected for the specific disability reviewed. Percentages calculated on such a selected group do not give a true indication of the frequency of each specific disability in the cerebrally palsied
population at large. She is also often guilty of giving percentages without clearly stating the numbers upon which they are based, and in some places percentages are quoted for numbers as low as six. Had Miss Dunson given the raw figures and avoided the use of percentages, particularly where these apply to small numbers, the book would have gained in value and statistical clarity.

These few controversial points do not detract in any way from the merits of this report, which is realistic, readable and based on acute observation of a large number of cases. While many will not agree with all the views expressed, Miss Dunson must be congratulated on making a valuable addition to the literature on cerebral palsy. This is a book which should be in the library of everyone interested in this subject.—G. A. Pollock.


"The Social Welfare Review" is a new monthly publication of the Greek Ministry of Social Welfare. The first number contains fourteen essays on the various stages of rehabilitation of the physically disabled. Each article is summarised in English at the end of the journal.

The Minister (at the time of publication) and Mr Goutos outline the programme arranged for the nearly thirty thousand disabled in a country with a population of seven millions, which is recovering from ten years of warfare. Dr Pournaropoulos writes an interesting history of the disabled, which is illustrated. Various authors devote chapters to many of the problems of children and wounded. One essay discusses the State care of the civilian disabled, a very difficult problem in Athens where there is a beggar at every street corner. Dr Harold Balme makes a contribution: and Miss Rachel Collier, an after-care sister who has been in Greece for over two years, writes on physiotherapy.

This publication is welcome in that it shows the effort being made to assist the disabled in a country ruined by wars and fever. The technical and financial assistance given by other countries has been appreciated by the Greek Government, which has dealt in a non-party way with the social problems, in spite of great difficulty. It seems likely that World Health Organisation has cleared the country of the mosquito, so that the scourge of malaria will no longer ruin the physical and mental conditions in Greece. This journal indicates that one social problem is under control, although four years ago it was not understood. The Ministry and Mr Goutos are to be congratulated on their work and the publication of this journal, both of which are an example to small nations.—St J. Dudley Buxton.


I like this book; for, although I may not agree with all the views expressed, that does not mean the views are wrong, and although the book may not be perfect there is in it a quality of perfection. What, after all, is the perfect text-book for the student? It must, I believe, be a book neither so large that he will become confused and lost, nor so small that his sense of proportions will be abused. It must reflect an open mind and yet be stiffened by appropriate authority; so that the student may be intrigued by implied controversy and yet nevertheless gain a foundation of accepted knowledge. Finally—and this is surely the most important—the book must present its contents clearly, that the student will be able to understand, and interestingly, that he may be stimulated to inquire. Now this handbook entirely encompasses the modest objective it has set up; its illustrations are reasonably representative, the legends are realistic and the pattern of the book is clear and extremely practical. It is amazingly comprehensive for its size, and this is achieved by economy of words—always an attractive feature if, as in this instance, clarity is preserved. Also preserved is a balanced outlook, which seems to me the same as a sensible attitude and implies good surgical judgment. For example, take the section on Dupuytren's contracture (page 538). What more could you want? My pet theory perhaps, or yours; but what of it?