Book Reviews


This new textbook designed for undergraduates is an important contribution to orthopaedic literature. The book is of the highest quality as one would expect for its author is one of the foremost of the younger Canadian orthopaedic surgeons and a great teacher.

I have read the book with great interest for it approaches the problem of teaching orthopaedics to undergraduates in ways different to that of this country. The teaching of speciality surgery in the undergraduate curriculum is a problem for so much has to be condensed in so little time. The book is a lengthy one and may well be longer than British students will find to their liking but in just over 500 pages it covers both orthopaedics and injury. There is perhaps an emphasis on orthopaedic conditions and injuries in children rather than in adults, which is the natural outcome of the author's involvement in paediatric orthopaedics.

In condensing this formidable body of material into a shortened form many problems arise, and this at times makes uneasy reading. There are, I believe, too many figures, small photographs and x-rays in the corners of pages; they do not always show enough detail to make them contributory. The price, as is common with North American textbooks, will be a problem for the student in this country.

Despite its minor limitations this is a noteworthy and considerable contribution to the available books for undergraduates in our speciality.—J. I. P. JAMES.


The usual contributors to this course, of which the reviewer is one, were reinforced on this occasion by an impressive array of leading authorities in this field. The book therefore gives an authoritative account of current practice, with a more comprehensive cover of the prosthetic field. There are numerous books on amputations for the surgeon but very few on the subject of prosthetics. In truth, the surgeon has often shown scant attention to the problems of prosthetic replacement for his patients. It is to be hoped that the modern orthopaedic surgeon will not share this neglect and this book is an ideal opportunity to gain knowledge in this subject. It is well edited and its main strength is in the sections covering lower limb amputations at all levels. The method used has been to describe the technique of amputation and follow it by a section on the biomechanical problems involved in walking subsequently. This is followed by a description of the prosthetic replacement.

In the upper limb the current position of prosthetic replacement is described. The development of externally powered prostheses and their place in prosthetic practice is described. There are two valuable chapters on the evaluation of aids and prostheses for the disabled, a field which has been greatly neglected and requires much fuller study.

The section of the book devoted to amputations and prosthetics finishes with a description of the production aspects of prosthetic supply, with particular reference to the introduction of the modular principle. This is a most important field and must be considered seriously in the context of the artificial limb services in this country in the future.

The following section of the book describes briefly the present orthotic practice in this country. The use of the word “orthosis” has been introduced into the English language to describe what in the past has been known as an orthopaedic appliance, and one assumes that we will eventually be accustomed to the use of the term. The section on orthotics is closed by an interesting chapter on the experiences of the Ljubljana Centre. Using functional electrical stimulation of muscles as an orthotic aid a resultant improvement in the gait of hemiplegics has been very impressive. A very
important section covers the educational requirements thought necessary for the proper training and certification of the prosthetists and orthotists of the future so as to give them professional status. The selected bibliography is excellent and comprehensive.

In summary, this book provides carefully selected and up-to-date information about this important subject. Many orthopaedic surgeons have in the past tended to neglect this field and it is one in which we should be giving a vigorous lead. This book will help us towards this goal.—D. W. LAMB.


The great number of deforming syndromes which are the result of environmental or genetic change in the foetus make interesting reading. Many have an orthopaedic interest and anyone who does much work with children will see a number of these patients and will find it a most useful book. Its title “malformations” by intent excludes the myopathies and neuropathies.

It does, however, give only a brief account of each syndrome, one page with photographs, x-rays and references. However, this condensed pattern is in itself valuable because in one short book one has the characteristic appearances of the possible diagnoses in any problem of this type presenting clinically. I see it as a most useful reference book and will personally keep it by me for very frequent consultation. It lists 135 syndromes, most of them rare and often previously not known to me.

With a rapid delineation of these syndromes and the recognition of new ones occurring so frequently the book will unfortunately before long be outdated but we may hope for future editions to keep up with this explosion of knowledge in this field.—J. I. P. JAMES.


This symposium brought together the experience of a number of centres in North America in the management of this extremely difficult and fortunately rare disability. With certain modifications and some sub-division Aitken’s original classification of the condition gives a useful basis on which the planning of treatment can be considered, but nevertheless it is essential that each child be assessed individually.

Bilateral cases rarely warrant operative treatment lest their ability to walk without prostheses be interfered with, but for the unilateral case the reader will find here a wealth of information regarding possible surgical procedures, their indications, results and complications. In the long run the problem is largely one of prostheses, their construction and fitting, and orthopaedic surgeons would be unwise to undertake treatment except in consultation with a first-class prosthetic service. Dr Aitken is to be congratulated on bringing together these splendidly illustrated papers which will surely act as a reference book on the subject for some years to come.—T. J. FAIRBANK.


Part of this excellent monograph has already appeared in the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*. It shows what can be discovered when one man takes a rare and little known disease, finds a large number of cases and writes a very full account of them. The disease proves to be a fascinating syndrome which can, after his study, be clearly differentiated into several different varieties, each with its characteristic genetic behaviour. This type of study needs to be emulated for a number of other conditions which at present are rare and little understood.

Although many of the manifestations are unlikely to present to an orthopaedic surgeon, when one reads this book it is surprising the number of possible ways that one might see such patients without fully recognising the disease background.—J. I. P. JAMES.