

REVIEWS

Practical Text Book of Leprosy. R. G. Cochrane. Oxford University Press, 1947. Price 42/-.

A textbook by Dr. Cochrane will naturally arouse considerable interest in all concerned with leprosy work. This book sets out to fill the gap between "the type of text book which deals largely with the theoretical aspects of the subject" and the study of practical procedures which are scattered throughout the literature. After a brief survey of etiology and epidemiology, the earlier part of the book deals with the clinical and histological aspects of the disease, with serological tests and classification in its broader sense. Workers of lesser experience frequently find the basic concepts of tuberculoid and lepromatous leprosy both difficult and puzzling, and the author has been at pains to build up a living picture of these processes and to give them interpretation and meaning.

The main part of the book deals with the treatment of leprosy and its complications. The reader is given a wealth of detail on the treatment of leprosy with hydnocarpus oil and its derivatives. Lepa fever and tuberculoid reaction are described in greater detail than is usually found in text books, and the treatment of these conditions is given in a manner that is thorough, practical and clear. The medical and surgical management of ulceration, nerve involvement and complications of the eye, nose and throat are also excellently presented. It is in these chapters that Dr. Cochrane is at his best, and it is here that the less experienced leprologist will find a mine of information on what to do in almost any of the complications of leprosy.

The latter part of the book deals very adequately with institutional problems, survey work and the prevention of leprosy. There is a very welcome emphasis on the importance of children throughout the whole book. The illustrations are admirable.

The book is important enough to merit criticism, particularly in view of the fact that further editions will undoubtedly be called for. There are a number of textual errors. On page 19, eighteen lines from the bottom, the phrase "than any other single factor" should be omitted. On page 38, the captions of the microphotographs should be reversed. On page 124 there is a statement "the preparation of ethyl esters is a comparatively simple matter and details of the preparation are added as an appendix of this chapter." This promise is not fulfilled. On page 156, under the

heading Chronic Diffuse Episcleritis, the words " twice a day " should come after " The eye is washed out with saline " and not after " trypan blue injected subconjunctivally." On page 265 " slim " pencil should of course read " skin " pencil. The preamble to the bibliography indicates that the references are listed under chapters, whereas the references are actually given in alphabetical order. (I am indebted to the author for drawing my attention to these errors).

It will be felt by some that the earlier chapters of this book are too expository in character, and that there is too great a stress on interpretation. In treatment with hydnocarpus oil more mention might be made of the variation of dosage according to age and body weight, and also during menstruation, pregnancy and puerperium. The treatment of tuberculoid reaction by increased dosage of hydnocarpus oil is not mentioned.

Some leprologists will feel that too great emphasis is laid on the self healing nature of tuberculoid leprosy. Even more will find difficulty in accepting Dr. Cochrane's view that there is never an evolution from true tuberculoid to lepromatous leprosy. The view that tuberculoid leprosy can never become lepromatous can only be maintained by the claim that tuberculoid leprosy of this nature is " atypical ".

In a text book which merits the attention of leprosy workers everywhere, there is sometimes too much personal emphasis and too much reference to purely Indian experience. Readers would have welcomed more details of Dr. Cochrane's views and experience with the newer sulphone treatment.

These criticisms are only justified by an appreciation of the very real value of this text book. It fills a long felt gap in the teaching of leprosy work. It will be found of indispensable value to the younger leprologist. It is a text book that we can confidently recommend to everyone who deals with the practical problems of leprosy.

A review of this book would be incomplete without mention of the warm and deep humanity of the author in his approach to the social and human aspects of the disease.