

THE SCHOOLBOY ; A study of his nutrition, physical development and health.

By G. E. FRIEND, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
with a foreword by Prof. J. C. Drummond,
W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., Cambridge. 1935.
Price 7/6.

Dr. Friend has undoubtedly done a great service not only to the schoolboy but also to the science of nutrition by the publication of this careful and prolonged study. The book, too, has appeared at a most opportune time, for the subject is one on which the public conscience has been roused and concerning which there is much, unfortunately too much, loose talking. Hence the record of the results of a systematic investigation of the population of a well-known school (Christ's Hospital) over the long period of 20 years is specially valuable. Fortunately for the investigation the period of study embraced the years of the Great War when food rationing was enforced, so that the effect of a restricted diet as well as a more liberal diet both in quantity and quality, which had been instituted during the later years, is to be observed.

The author has set himself the task of correlating the development, nutrition and health of the boys with their diet and general hygiene. Detailed information regarding the diet and physical exercise on the height, weight and chest expansion of the boys as well as on the incidence of various diseases is supplied in the form of innumerable tables and charts so that the reader has no difficulty in forming his own conclusions, although the author's discussions are always illuminating. Roughly, the period of study is divided into four periods, 1 pre-war, 2 during the war, and 3 and 4 post-war, all of which present fundamental differences in the quantity and quality of the diet provided.

We agree with the author that his findings reveal that the average height and weight of the boys were greatest during the period of most liberal feeding especially so far as the absolute amounts of fat and protein, and particularly the relative amounts of those of animal origin, are concerned. Curiously, however, the health of the boys did not show a corresponding improvement.

Indeed, for illnesses such as chills, colds and we would specially mention septic conditions, there was a much higher percentage incidence during the years when the largest amounts of vitamin A and D were in the diet. We were also struck by the frequency of what was diagnosed as influenza during these same years of liberal feeding, and that during this same period of maximum vitamin administration the complications of the influenzal attacks were most numerous. But perhaps the most striking fact which emerged, so far as the health of the boys was concerned, was the great increase in bone fractures during the period of enforced rationing when margarine instead of butter was being used in the dietary. These facts only show the complexity of the question and the need for more studies like that of Dr. Friend before we can draw any definite conclusions. One, however, at times wonders if school studies are the most suitable for the purpose and are not bound to disclose anomalies, because the subjects spend so much of their time at home when the dietary and other conditions are not under control.

PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS.

By R. C. CABOT. Eleventh Edition. Baillière,
Tindall & Cox, London. 1934. 22/6.

Any book which reaches its eleventh edition must necessarily be meeting a desired want and has obtained such a hold on the student of medicine that it should require nothing more from the Reviewer than a mere mention of its appearance. In this edition opportunity has been taken to introduce recent developments in methods of investigation, e.g., in connection with coronary thrombosis, the measurement of cardiac reserve and intrathoracic neoplasms, and radiology in pulmonary tuberculosis receives fuller attention in this edition than the preceding one.

The information and views are expressed in a most direct fashion, the type is good and clear and there is a wealth of appropriate illustrations, those dealing with the physiognomy of disease being especially informative. We are glad to see that in the discussion of percussion the author favours the light stroke, though we regret

that at the same time he does not lay more stress on paying attention to the feeling of resistance, changes in which are often more instructive than variations in resonance. The chapter dealing with electrocardiography is full but it would have been more helpful for the student if in the records of the tracings the various waves had been marked by the appropriate letter. Minor details like these are of little moment in a book of such general excellence but the deliberate omission of the consideration of the blood and urine in such a volume is to our mind a serious mistake and will interfere with its popularity on this side of the Atlantic. The author excuses himself by stating that these come under the heading of "laboratory data" and are "no longer taught as part of Physical Diagnosis." It is just this attitude which is undermining the sound education of the medical student.

BLAIR BELL'S PRINCIPLES OF GYNÆCOLOGY.

(4th Edition).

Figs. 507.

9 × 6 Pp. xiv + 848. Plates 16 (coloured).
Published by Baillière, Tindall & Cox.
1935. Price 35/-.

This is a valuable and up-to-date work on Gynæcology. To call it a text-book for students with its 848 pages is paying a high compliment to the student as there is no surer way of misleading an undergraduate in medicine than by recommending him to read large text-books on his numerous subjects.

The book is an excellent one for use by the practitioner with a leaning towards gynæcology and especially so for post-graduates studying for the membership of the College of Obstetricians and Gynæcologists of which Blair Bell was the Founder and First President.

The microphotographs, pathological drawings and diagrams of operations are all excellent. The arrangement of the book is clear and rational. It is a complete work of its kind in that paragraphs and chapters are given on all details of the subject e.g., post-operative exercises, anæsthetics, preparation for operation in a private house, blood transfusion, &c.

A gynæcologist reading the book will differ from many of the author's views as the book is essentially based on the author's own work. It is not an impersonal work on gynæcology. This definitely adds to its interest but leaves the work open to criticism e.g.

- (1) Radium in the treatment of cancer of the uterus is of more value than Blair Bell would lead one to believe by his list of contra-indications to its use.
- (2) The frequency of the author's use of ventro suspension in addition to his advocated prolapse operation makes one wonder if he should not have adopted and advised the Fothergill operation.
- (3) Gilliam's operation is not described. It is referred to as in many ways technically very imperfect and a description of Blair Bell's modification of the operation alone is given in detail, although it is not commonly favoured by gynæcologists. Webster also suffers from detraction in the description of his classical operation.

These like all other faults in the book, are obvious to all readers.

Once again it can be emphasised that this book is an advance in the text-book description of Gynæcology and should be used by all post-graduate students of Gynæcology.

THE RHEUMATIC DISEASES.

By G. D. KERSLEY, M.D., M.R.C.P.

Published by Heinemann. 1935. Price 6/-.

This small book is one of several which have recently been produced on the subject of the rheumatic diseases. It does not appear to contribute much to the subject, but, allowing for the exigencies of its bulk, it constitutes quite a good resumé of modern ideas. Professor F. R. Fraser, in an excellent preface, emphasises the need for more pre- and post-graduate instruction in this difficult group of diseases, and it is to be hoped that he may be able to give practical outcome to this expression of opinion in the near future.

The reproductions of the nine X-ray pictures which illustrate the book are good, and the light weight of the volume makes it suitable for the bed-side.