REVIEWs

MASS MINIATURE RADIOGRAPHY OF CIVILIANS
For the Detection of Pulmonary Tuberculosis
M.R.C. SPECIAL REPORT SERIES NO. 251
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The publication of this report is a notable event. In addition to presenting a detailed description of the technique, it gives a comprehensive analysis of a survey made in 1940-1 in the London area drawn from the employees of two factories, and from the Civil Service personnel of a number of Government Departments. Comparison of the results of a survey of other similar surveys of larger and smaller groups by the same and other methods (fluoroscopy, full-size radiography) and in various parts of the country shows a striking similarity in the observed incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis. The restriction of x-rays, particularly among industrial workers, is still maintained by the sanatorium regime and collapse therapy; and important as these aspects are, they are often only makeshifts since we know of no better treatment at the present time. Perhaps the social aspects of the disease are much more important, and this book by Gloyne, an able observer, is greatly to be welcomed, particularly during war-time. His purpose is to set forth for students of social medicine, especially health visitors and those interested in the social aspects of tuberculosis, the problems of the seed and soil of tuberculosis as they concern both the individual and the community at the present day. In order to fulfill its avowed purpose the book must be elementary, but all the same it contains a valuable collection of simple facts about tuberculosis which ought to be known by every medical practitioner. All medical students would certainly be well advised to read the book. It starts a short historical review entitled, ‘From Consumption to Tuberculosis.’ This is followed by an account of the discovery of the tubercle bacillus by Koch, and of the different types of bacillus and toxin. Chapter 4 deals with the propaganda and unfavourable soils for tuberculosis, classification, manifestations at different ages, bovine tuberculosis and infection and portals of entry. The prevalence of the disease and its effects during the present century are discussed, together with a short account of its manifestations in primitive races. A chapter is devoted to tuberculosis in industry. The author points out that the latest advance along the road of protection has been the application of mass miniature radiography to industry, and he wisely stresses that to be effective it must be applied in the factory at frequent and regular intervals, otherwise it is liable to create a false sense of security. Much of the chapter is devoted to a description of the various dust diseases of the lung and their relation to tuberculosis. It is a pity that the word ‘pneumo-nkoniosis’ is used instead of the (unfortunate and contraction ‘pneumoniosis.’ Further chapters discuss important subjects such as case finding and prevention, care and after care, and tuberculosis legislation. At the end is a short bibliography. The value of a bibliography is that it is easy for reference: this one is printed as text and therefore is not easy. A good bibliography would have enhanced the value of a useful, timely and welcome book.

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