BOOK REVIEWS


This edition, like its predecessor published in 1937, is a series of valuable monographs. Dr. Ethel Browning has collected literature on the toxicity to men and animals of 126 solvents and has succeeded in making the narrative very readable. Additions include monographs on substances such as silicons and picoline which have only recently come into common use. The extent of the literature and the dullness of much of it makes her achievement on both scores most notable. The selection has been admirable: the trivial has been omitted but nothing of importance missed. Also, Dr. Browning has drawn on the files of the Home Office and Ministry of Labour for some of her information. The result is a concise and comprehensive narrative. Any monograph might be taken as a model: that on benzoil is superb. The preface tells us 15·2 million gallons of it (excluding motor and aviation spirits) were distributed in 1951.

No serious criticism can be offered on the book. A minor improvement would be to place the references immediately after each substance rather than at the end of the chapter where of necessity they accumulate into a formidable list. Some expression of Dr. Browning's views on the literature she reports would be especially valuable.

The book should be of value to all physicians interested in industrial medicine, but if chemical engineers and managers and whoever deal with toxic solvents keep this book on their desk, many hazards might be avoided. A daily lectionary would do much to safeguard the health and life of men exposed to toxic solvents.

The Food and Drug Act 1938 requires that patent medicines must have the formula printed on the label. Admittedly, the formula is often designed to blind the ignorant, and the not-so-ignorant, but at least it is there and can, with patience, be deciphered. Those who have to deal with commercial solvents and paints know how difficult it is to find out what is actually in the product. If the formula is not regarded as secret, it is certainly surrounded in mystery and sometimes it seems that even the manufacturers do not know what they have put into a solvent. If a member of parliament, who had luck of the draw, introduced a Bill to enforce the declaration of the constituents of all solvents and paints, etc., he would do a lot to preserve health in industry. Even so, the study of Dr. Browning's work would still be essential.

T. A. LLOYD DAVIES


This is a valuable little book produced for the very modest price of 12s. 6d. It covers the whole range of medical services and all forms of insurance, benefits, compensation, and pensions administered by the State; it will serve a useful purpose in explaining the complicated, detailed and, at times, almost incomprehensible legal terminology of the various acts, orders, and regulations which form the structure of the scheme. It even goes further and makes a rather dry subject always readable and often interesting and it can be read as a book quite apart from its main function as a work of reference. It is sure to become a textbook for the student reading for the Diploma in Public Health and all interested in state medicine.

The book is, however, addressed to the general practitioner who is a particularly vulnerable victim of the great mass of legislation. He has never the time and rarely the interest to read the acts and their riders in the original, and a readable working guide, which is admirably complete, should be of the greatest service to him.

From the strictly medical aspect there is little of interest to the doctor in industry but the economic side is of importance to him, and furthermore most doctors in industry are also general practitioners.

The book is divided into six sections: the first is devoted to an historical explanation of the evolution of the Health Service, the second to the doctor-patient relationship showing the rights of each, and the third to the various statutory bodies administering the Service, with separate chapters on the Medical Practices Committee, the Executive Council, the Local Medical Committee, National Insurance, the Local Health Authority, and Hospital Boards. Each is written by an expert in his own field and there is no overlapping of subject matter.

Section 4 deals with the non-statutory bodies: the General Medical Services Committee, the B.M.A., and the Guild of Freedom in Medicine. Section 5 describes the special services, dental, eye, maternity, pharmaceutical, and hospital welfare, and includes an interesting chapter on the work of the coroner.

Section 6 is the only non-factual part of this work and has two chapters on "Some Remediable Deficiencies" and "Looking Forward". The first of these is written by the editor and few will disagree with Dr. Sorsby's proposals which are sensible and restrained, but the epidemiologist may boggle at the suggestion of nursing
tuberculosis in general wards, however many cases may gain accidental admission with another disease. Particularly will he find an echo in the hearts of most doctors about getting patients into hospital, especially the aged, and the regrettable fact that the patient can pillory the doctor before the Executive Council but the doctor has no similar redress against the patient. There is much strong feeling about this near relation of the "people's court" of less happily governed countries, and at least the doctor should be able to have equal rights before it.

The last chapter on "Looking Forward" sometimes means looking very far forward, and by no means all doctors will agree with parts of it, but this is an interesting chapter with many valuable suggestions on improving the Health Service. A member of the staff of Yale University Department of Public Health drew the administration of the Health Service on the blackboard and opened his lecture as follows: "Only in England, if anywhere, could such a thing work". The point is it does work fairly well and we should hasten slowly towards a soulless perfection.

J. P. W. Hughes


The author is Director of the Max Planck (formerly the Kaiser Wilhelm) Institute for Industrial Physiology at Dortmund, and this book is based mainly on the researches carried out by himself and his colleagues. The book is intended as a practical handbook for doctors working in industry, engineers, and generally for those concerned with the management of labour. It outlines the results of researches in industrial physiology which are capable of practical application in such a form that they can be readily understood by one who is not a trained physiologist.

After some preliminary discussion, there comes a chapter which describes the structure and function of muscle, the phenomena associated with static and dynamic effort, reflexes, and motor coordination.

Then follows a long chapter on the conditions and effects of work. It deals with fatigue and recovery, and the effects of rest pauses and of adaptation. It is remarked that in determining human performance both physiological and psychological factors play their part, and that whatever the physiological capacity for work good performance also depends on the will to work. There are illustrations of the effects of sugar and phosphates, and of various drugs on performance; work-cultures are discussed in relation to physiological rhythm; and there is a good section on posture at work.

A further chapter deals with energy production and expenditure. Calory requirements for workers in various occupations are tabulated, and for some occupations the varying rates of energy expenditure during working hours are shown. There is a detailed consideration of the relationship between the maximum effort that can be exerted and the duration of effort.

Members of the Max Planck Institute have made many studies of the energy costs of various types of work, such as shovelling, hammering, and turning cranks, and the data from these are used in a discussion of rational work in which physiological consideration in machine construction are also dealt with.

In a chapter on the working climate the measurement of warmth and the effects of work at low and at high temperatures are examined. The discussion of the effects of high temperature includes a section on radiant heat. Salt excess and salt deficiency are considered, as is also the question of how much and what the worker should drink.

A further chapter deals with the composition of the air and atmospheric pressure with special reference to mining and caisson work; and another discusses work in relation to vision, noise, and vibration.

A discussion of nutrition and work brings out the dependence of work on adequate nourishment.

Finally, there are two chapters concerned with wages systems and hours of work.

This book is an excellent one and it is well produced.

Thomas Bedford


A physician who has taken a special interest in the emotional aspects of various diseases writes this book. "The communication is concerned entirely with the physical expression of the emotions irrespective of the personalities of the patients." He gives extensive accounts of effort syndrome and miner's nystagmus. Indeed the discussion of the literature dealing with these and of the author's personal experience of them occupies two-thirds of the pages. The remainder are devoted to short notes, mainly clinical, on the eye symptoms in thyrotoxicosis, the importance of emotion in precipitating or maintaining skin disease, "rheumatism" which has no obvious organic basis, and dysfunctions of the alimentary tract such as certain forms of colitis, constipation, proctalgia, and nervous dyspepsia.

The author's vocabulary is at times confusing. For instance, the introduction begins with the sentence: "There is little doubt that 60 per cent. of cases seen in a medical out-patient clinic are psychiatric in nature, and if these cases are not entirely psychiatric, they are predominantly so." It might have been better for the sake of clarity to have restated this sentence in such a way as "When a physical examination of a patient is supplemented by psychological and social investigations new facts are often revealed which may be of considerable importance for treatment and prevention". As the sentence stands the figure of 60% is meaningless. Or again, "Recognition of the psychiatric nature of the patient's complaint, either as an entirely psychosomatic condition, or a somatic condition with a psychoneurotic element, is essential." But what is a "condition" and what is an "element"? One is reminded of the famous medical report which read, "The condition of this man's