BOOK REVIEWS

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tations are of good quality and the various diagrams explain the points well, although Fig. 17 looks very like an acute disc lesion and not due to fibrosis of the ligamenta flava—a condition rarely seen at operation.

In the section dealing with treatment all the normal methods are well described together with an excellent chapter on manipulative techniques.

This book will appeal particularly to the practitioner interested in the manipulative treatment of back disorders.

G. P. ARDEN


This is the second edition of a book first published in 1950 by Dr. Thurber, chairman of the sub-committee for the standardization of joint measurements in industrial injury cases in California, U.S.A.

From the details and precise measurements in this book it is obvious that this subject is taken more seriously in the States than over here.

Dr. Thurber has tried to standardize the terminology, history taking, and method of measurements in industrial injury cases. A brief description is given of the normal anatomy and an attempt is made to define degrees of pain, which is almost impossible owing to the variability of patients. There are numerous photographs and diagrams showing how various parts of the spine and joints are measured. The methods closely resemble those used over here: in all cases a goniometer is used which certainly helps to reduce the margin of error.

Some confusion is caused by describing the knee and elbow range as 180° extension–140° flexion. Surely 180°–40° extension range is much simpler.

What Dr. Thurber calls thumb abduction is anatomically thumb extension, abduction being at 90° to the plane of the hand. Finger movements are measured in great detail and one wonders whether functional tests would not be better, such as the power of grip and ability to hold domestic articles or tools.

At the end of the book there is a table of average joint movements and a section on eye and head injury disabilities.

This book is a laudable effort to standardize what is at the moment a somewhat inexact science, and it is particularly valuable to those doing medico-legal work and for those concerned with industrial disability examinations.

G. P. ARDEN.


How does one evaluate the curate’s egg, the classical example of something good in parts? Doubtless it depends on the consumer. The Trades Union Congress, who issued this booklet, must know how to judge what the average trades unionist will want to know and to write accordingly. They have not, however, been able to marry this information with scientific exactitude and so satisfy the scientific reviewer.

Chapter 1 is the plain man’s guide to radiations, units, and instruments. There is too much unnecessary loose talk of “atomic radiations” and some misleading information, such as cosmic rays “are all relatively low powered” and radioactive materials enclosed “in containers . . . are then known as ‘sealed sources’”.

Chapter 2 on the use of radiations in medicine, industry etc. is much better. The whole pamphlet is extremely well illustrated with photographs and this is most helpful.

Chapter 3 is on radiation risks. Here is dogma, which in the circumstances is desirable and excusable.

Chapter 4 is on safeguards. It is in most ways admirable, but marred by howlers like “the maximum genetic dose to the whole population must not exceed 5 rems per year”—an error of thirtyfold.

Chapter 5 is all about international and national ways and means, particularly committees. The most important means is education. This is one of the booklet’s messages and cannot be too greatly stressed. To make this publication part of the public’s educational reading would need its revision by a firm editor.

JOHN F. LOITT


In his first sentence of Chapter 12 the author writes “Congenital abnormalities, physical and mental, are mainly caused by the alien substances added to food.” This provides a representative benchmark by which the well-informed medical reader can evaluate the author’s knowledge and judgement. An appendix containing about 90 chemical formulae and 291 references should not lead the reader to believe that this is a scientific treatise. If he consults those references which provide factual information he might well draw conclusions sharply at variance with those drawn by the author. It is to be hoped that the credulous reader will neither die of starvation nor require the administration of tranquilizers to allay the anxiety that might be aroused by accepting this as a serious presentation of a medical problem.

J. M. BARNES


This short book reviews the position of “elderly” men at work, whatever their chronological age, and comments on the trends which seem likely to take place with increasing mechanization. The problems which it highlights are widely experienced in industry, and are illustrated by a description of eight varied but fairly mechanized firms.

The book stresses the urgency of “a recasting of social values” with respect to retirement, including both financial aspects and the use people make of their