BOOK REVIEWS


In the preface to the first edition of Clinical Heart Disease, published in 1936, Dr. Levine expressed his preference for teaching that which is practical and useful in medicine in order to provide the practicing physician with information that is directly helpful in the care of the patient. In this the fourth edition he has kept firmly to this purpose. In the interval some forms of acquired heart disease, including bacterial endocarditis and valvular disease, have become more or less amenable to treatment. In those days recovery from bacterial endocarditis was a curiosity and the surgical treatment of acquired valvular disease, which Dr. Levine had helped to initiate, had been abandoned because of discouraging failures. With the advances in knowledge of the cause, diagnosis and the relief of cardiac disease, which the progress of these years has provided, Dr. Levine has kept steadily in step and, with his special genius as a teacher, he has set down his experience and his principles in this very useful volume.

No one who knows Dr. Levine will deny that he has definite ideas of his own. With some of these ideas one may express reserved disagreement but one cannot avoid admiration for the mass of knowledge here described. The volume has won a firm place among the practical tools of the modern cardiologist.

E. Cowles Andrus


The purpose of this book is to direct the transition of the medical student from basic laboratory procedures to the clinical study of physiology and pharmacologic problems in the living subject. The book contains most of the basic, orthodox physiologic aspects of the cardiovascular system related to detailed symptomatology and clinical entities. Abnormalities of function and the symptoms and signs of organic disease are properly differentiated. Great care is taken to integrate the symptoms and signs of cardiovascular disease with all other aspects of clinical medicine. The book, when carefully read, will give a basic understanding of cardiovascular problems.

G. C. Griffith


This book is composed of a series of articles prepared originally for the Nelson Loose-Leaf System of Medicine. The editor indicates in his preface that the decision to publish a separate monograph was made only after the manuscripts had been submitted. This lack of an initial plan probably explains why the volume is not a complete or coordinated work on diseases of the heart and circulation. The individual chapters, with a few exceptions, are authoritative and well written discussions of various aspects of cardiovascular disease. Unfortunately, there is much overlapping of the material presented by different contributors as well as considerable lack of balance with reference to the space allotted to separate subjects. Some of the articles, such as those on "Diseases of the Pericardium," "Chronic Valvular Heart Disease," and "Bacterial Endocarditis," suffer from paucity or absence of illustrations. Each chapter includes a selected bibliography which in many instances is quite extensive.

The volume opens with an informative, fully tabulated essay on the prevalence of heart disease by Haven Emerson. Dickinson W. Richards reviews cardiocirculatory physiology briefly and clearly in the second chapter, and the next 75 pages are devoted to two articles on disease of the pericardium. The second of these is a comprehensive discussion of chronic constrictive pericarditis but this subject already has taken up 12 of the 46 pages of the preceding article. Three papers on congenital heart disease follow. These consist of a reprint of Maude Abbott's chapter in the 1932 edition of the Nelson System, a lucid, up-to-date presentation of the physiology of congenital heart disease by Richard Bing, and a short consideration of the surgical treatment of congenital cardiovascular defects by George H. Humphreys, II. No one will ever question the importance of Maude Abbott's work or challenge her place in medical history but the necessity for including her article in the present volume is open to doubt. Bing fittingly directs attention to her contributions and, in addition to covering recent advances in our knowledge of congenital heart disease, undoubtedly repeats much of her treatise. For practical rather than sentimental purposes, Bing's chapter would have sufficed. The section on surgical therapy, although short, reiterates much that is considered in the preceding two chapters and might better have been incorporated in Bing's article.
Rheumatic heart disease is covered in a clear-cut, helpful manner. A part of the material is discussed again in the sections on cardiovascular roentgenology and chronic valvular heart disease. In the latter chapters, also, much of the subject matter of the article on cardiovascular syphilis is encountered a second time. The section on chronic valvular heart disease includes an excellent exposition of the hemodynamic effects of valvular lesions and the mechanism of the resulting physical signs.

Hypertensive vascular disease and its medical and surgical treatment are presented expertly by George A. Perera and Danna W. Atchley. Many, however, will take exception to the suggestion that the term “malignant hypertension” be discarded in favor of the phrase “hypertensive vascular disease in its accelerated or rapidly progressive phase.” The succeeding chapter on the surgical therapy of hypertension is an unnecessary repetition.

Only a few more pages are devoted to coronary heart disease than to cardiovascular syphilis. Although myocardial infarction and coronary insufficiency are dealt with thoroughly, the two contributions on these subjects overlap to a considerable degree, and there is no detailed delineation of the syndrome of angina pectoris. Furthermore, the discussion of the medical management of angina pectoris is not adequate and occupies less than a single page. In rather startling contrast, there is a separate chapter of 13 pages on the surgical treatment of this condition.

Pulmonary heart disease, cardiac complications in infectious diseases, and the heart in states of vitamin deficiency are taken up in clearly written, informative summaries. One of the best chapters in the book is that by Richard B. Cappon on the hyperactive carotid sinus syndrome. The article on congestive failure is complete and practical. The chapter on cardiac neurosis and the one on neurocirculatory asthenia are essentially duplicate discussions.

Clinical electrocardiography is reviewed in a well illustrated section of 96 pages. Much of the text is repeated, to no discernible advantage, in the chapter on abnormal mechanisms of the heart.

There is an instructive paper on arteriosclerosis by E. T. Bell and a good but insufficiently edited article on diseases of the peripheral vascular system. The latter includes a repetition of the discussion of aortic aneurysm presented earlier in the section on cardiovascular syphilis. It also considers arteriovenous fistula which is the subject of the following chapter by Daniel C. Elkin. The final sections of the volume consist of brief essays on periarteritis nodosa, proliferative endarteritis, and lupus erythematosus disseminatus by Franklin T. Hanger.

Although the book does not fulfill the requirements of an integrated text on cardiovascular disease, it must be emphasized that most of the individual contributions have genuine merit. The volume, therefore, can be recommended as a source of collateral reading for medical students and practitioners who wish to extend their knowledge in the cardiovascular field.

A. Carlton Ernstene


This paper covered monograph, in French, is a product of international cooperation: the first author, a distinguished American scientist of French extraction has done all his medical research in New York, while the other two authors, both Belgians, have worked at Brussels and Gent respectively.

The first part is concerned with “Technics” and contains chapters on cardiac catheterization, on the estimation of cardiac output by many methods, on the measurement of pressures in the greater and lesser circulation and in the cavities of the heart through cardiac catheters, on the estimation of circulation time, of blood volume, and of pulmonary function. These descriptions are detailed and are accompanied by extensive and well chosen bibliographies.

The second part, entitled “Results and Interpretations,” is concerned with the physiologic aspects of many circulatory diseases, especially as measured by the Fick cardiac output method with cardiac catheterization, and by right auricular, right ventricular and pulmonary artery pressures taken through cardiac catheters. Results secured by the cardiac output methods available for clinical use before the introduction of the Fick method are not covered by this review.

Various chapters describe the classic physiologic experiments; and the normal regulation of the circulation. They give experimental data concerned with the fundamental physiologic abnormalities of chronic heart and pulmonary disease, in right and left heart failure and in combined failure. Results showing changes induced in the cardiac output and on the pressures in both systemic and pulmonary circulation when therapeutic agents are given to patients suffering from various diseases, are given in great detail. Similar findings in such special conditions as anemia, beri beri, thyrhoxicosis, constrictive pericarditis, and myocardial infarction are also reported.

After describing the technics employed, the results of estimates of the circulation through parts of the body such as the coronary vessels, brain, kidney, and liver are also reviewed.

In their theoretic conceptions of cardiac function
the authors are on the conservative side. They uphold the Starling conception against those who doubt its importance in intact animals and in clinical conditions. Their view of cardiac failure coincides with that proposed in 1935 by Harrison.

The book therefore is an exhaustive treatise on the subject of the title, with a most extensive and well chosen bibliography. The field covered has been greatly advanced during the last 20 years and no one has been more conspicuous in leading this advance than the first author, whose personal experience with so much of the subject matter gives the monograph an authority not possessed by most reviews. It is undoubtedly the best thing of its kind known to the reviewer in any language, and he hopes that Dr. Courand has in mind to translate it into English as he is so eminently competent to do. It is however not a book for practitioners but for experts in the field, and most of these would have no trouble in reading the French edition and, one hopes, would do so with appreciation of the authors' simple, direct and always clear style. And, judging from the papers presented to the First International Cardiological Congress, held in Paris in 1950, there has been great need for a presentation of this field to French speaking medical scientists and practitioners.

Some reservations are inevitable in the early stages of any field, and data concerned with the accuracy of many of the figures given leave much to be desired, but it should be evident to every reader of this book that a large amount of consistent quantitative information has been secured which represents a great advance in our knowledge of the pulmonary circulation in disease. The monograph contains a wealth of information which will be invaluable to all students of the abnormal physiology of cardiovascular disease and the effects of therapy upon it.

ISAAC STARR


This monograph presents experimental results which have not previously appeared in print and is a stimulating consolidation of data. In brief, the authors found that electrocardiographic complexes having the same general appearances as the human Wolff-Parkinson-White complex could be produced in dogs in a variety of ways. From a study of a large number of animals the authors feel that the Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome may be divided into a nodal type and a ventricular type. They postulate that an anomalous anatomic pathway is not necessary for the explanation of this syndrome since they show that the normal intact conduction system is all that is essential to experimentally produce the syndrome. They believe that early excitation of certain portions of the ventricular muscle is due to accelerated conduction by parts of the normal conduction system. One of the most interesting concepts evolved supposes that stimuli arising in localized areas of the ventricles can reflexly produce changes in the conducting qualities of the A-V node.

These concepts, which will require further investigation, should be most stimulating to all persons interested in the physiology of cardiac rhythm and conduction and are much broader than the mere application to the Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome.

J. SCOTT BUTTERWORTH


The general practitioner to whom this handbook is directed will find it a useful and authoritative small manual for ready reference.

To cover the subject of prevention and treatment of cardiac emergencies in a few pages is a big order. The authors have approached this task in a workmanlike manner. The various recommended treatments with few exceptions follow currently accepted patterns. They have, perhaps, overemphasized the arrhythmias and slighted congestive heart failure, the condition which the general practitioner is most frequently called upon to treat. It is unlikely that the family physician will be too interested in the electrocardiograms, which are not uniformly clear. The tables on differential diagnosis are very well organized. The one dealing with syncope is particularly good. There are many case reports which for the most part are brief and illustrative. It would make for easier reference if these case reports were more definitely separated from the text and if more subheadings were used throughout the entire book.

The chapter on traumatic heart disease is carefully worded and will give little comfort to those who try to make a "heart case" out of every minor injury to the chest wall.

The difficulties inherent in the early diagnosis of dissecting aneurysm are particularly well presented. There may be some who will disagree with the authors' position in applying anticoagulant therapy to all cases of coronary thrombosis, mild or severe. Others will not agree on the use of adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH) in all cases of rheumatic carditis.

Many will applaud the skepticism expressed regarding the efficiency of present day surgical procedures for the relief of angina pectoris.

The index to this little volume has been carefully prepared. The 280 references are well selected.

W. H. BUNN.

The Thoracic Surgical Patient is not a presentation of surgical technic but deals rather, as the subtitle states, with "Preoperative, Anesthetic and Postoperative Care." The material appears in 13 chapters commencing with pertinent physiology and biochemistry and ending with a section on rehabilitation of the thoracic patient. The remaining chapters discuss the various subspecialties of chest surgery, such as collapse therapy, surgery of the esophagus and cardiovascular surgery.

Including, as this book does, such a wide range of material in a rather short volume, the author is forced for the sake of brevity into a didactic style with the elimination of many points of controversial nature. One exception to this is the chapter on anesthesia which, although concisely written, nevertheless deals fairly completely with the many possible methods and available agents, together with the advantages and dangers of each. The chapter on rehabilitation is also very well written and should prove of real value to those concerned with the care of the thoracic patient.

This book is not intended for the specialist who would desire a much more comprehensive discussion of the field. To one entrusted with subsidiary care of the thoracic patient there is however a great deal of very helpful information which will start him in the right direction. This will have to be supplemented particularly in respect to the problems associated with individual patient variation and to those of children which are largely neglected. This reviewer would have wished for the inclusion of a section on specific nursing care and instruction which is so important to the care of this type of patient.

The style is clear, the book reads easily; it is well edited (although it contains a few inevitable errors), and both the index and the up to date bibliography will prove very valuable to the reader.

ROBERT E. GROSS


This monograph, written by one of the outstanding German experts on the subject, deals with advances in the electrophysiology of the heart. The presentation is based on the concept of the membrane theory. The fundamental principles of the genesis of action currents under normal and various pathologic conditions are explained in a clear and very instructive way in the first part of the book. In a following section the theory of the electrocardiogram is discussed from the standpoint of a differential as well as vectorial interpretation, and the two theories are compared with regard to their validity and compatibility. The last part deals with electrophysiologic processes underlying disturbances of formation and conduction of the cardiac impulse, and with abnormalities of the electrocardiographic deflections.

Experimental data from the literature are critically reviewed and unsolved problems are pointed out repeatedly throughout the text, both being clarified by many instructive schematic drawings. Unfortunately, at some important points of the presentation, confusion is created owing to a mixup of illustrations and respective legends (figs. 99 and 103), by inconsistencies between text and diagram (fig. 144) and by evident mistakes (p. 320 concerning the effect of electrolytes, and p. 378 concerning primary and secondary T-wave changes). The terminology used by the author to designate various types of electrocardiographic leads is not in accord with that familiar to the American reader. The localization of intraventricular blocks is discussed without consideration of the precordial electrocardiogram. The author favors the theory of a unifocal origin of auricular fibrillation and flutter, and omits completely mention of the re-entry theory in his discussion of the mechanism of premature beats.

This volume is certainly a remarkable, though not always successful, attempt to reconcile different concepts dominating the German and English literature. A revised edition, considering to a greater extent the work of Latin and Anglo-American authors, could represent a standard book on the electrophysiology of the heart.

A. Pick


This book is designed for the pathologist and internist as well as for the syphilographer and cardiologist. Now that many of the late manifestations of syphilis of the cardiovascular system, so common three or four decades ago, have become less frequent, and some even rare, it is good to have a book like this which includes, in considerable detail, a survey of the clinical and pathologic manifestations of the late stage of the disease, as it affects the heart and circulatory system. The illustrative examples of clinical cases, many with autopsy findings, from the vast personal experience of the author are particularly valuable. His ready acceptance of the probable syphilitic origin of a case of mitral stenosis, in a patient in whom the evidence of previous, or existing, rheumatic disease was not obvious, but in whom the existence of syphilis had been proved, is just an illustration of the bias of the author, but does not detract from the value of the book as a whole. Even at this late date in the history of this disease the book can be considered a valuable addition to the subject.

HARRY GOLDBLATT

This fourth in a series of annual volumes brings to the reader almost verbatim the discussions which were held at the 1951 Annual Conference on Blood Clotting and Allied Problems, held under the auspices of the Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation. This particular conference is the more notable for the addition to the panel of 17 eminent participants of eight guests, including Dr. Helen Payling Wright, of University College Hospital Medical School, London, one of England’s foremost “coagulationists.”

The discussions center about seven major presentations, the enumeration of which will serve as an index to the content of the volume: Methods for Direct Investigation of Factors Leading to Thrombosis (Knizely); Studies on Canine Hemophilia (Brinkhous); Characteristics of Blood Platelets: Their Significance in Thrombus Formation (Helen Payling Wright); Morphologic and Physiologic Studies of Platelets and Hemostasis (Zucker); Antithrombin—Alpha Tocopherol (Seegers); The Transition of Fibrinogen to Fibrin (Laki); and Polaroscopic Studies of Fibrinogen—Fibrin Reaction (Jaques). Knizely’s description of his more recent experimental work concerned with the phenomenon of “sludged blood” and his exposition of views on this provocative phenomenon are of particular interest as is the section devoted to the purported antithrombic action of alpha tocopherol. In this connection, John H. Kay describes at some length his experiences with alpha tocopherol as an index of the thrombosing tendency and as a therapeutic agent for preventing thromboembolism. The critical discussion of the claims advanced by the protagonists are of practical interest to the clinician as well as to the investigator of the clotting mechanism. Particularly striking is the inclusion in this conference of several topics concerned with or related to the morphologic aspects of intravascular clotting, a phase of the general subject which has been relegated to the background during recent years when the physicochemical aspects of coagulation have evoked by far the greater amount of interest. The attention to “sludged blood,” to the role of platelets in the formation of thrombi, and to the formation of fibrin indicates a healthy resurgence of interest in the morphology of the blood clot.

While the published accounts of these intriguing conferences are directed primarily to the expert in the field of coagulation, and particularly to the laboratory investigator, any physician who has more than a casual interest in intravascular clotting will find the content of this volume both informative and provocative. As may be said of the transactions of other conferences sponsored annually by the Macy Foundation, the published reports constitute a repository for the most advanced thinking in the particular field.

CHARLES D. MARPLE


This monograph represents the first published attempt to summarize the clinically useful information about an instrumental method which began to emerge from obscurity just a little over 10 years ago. In one sense it is long overdue; in another, it represents an almost impossible accomplishment, since the present body of knowledge is so diverse, and has been obtained with such a wide variety of instrumentation.

The authors belong to the high frequency school of ballistocardiography, and have included an excellent chapter on the physical considerations of the instrument. This was written for them by Edgar D. Seymour, Arthur W. Tyler and Miller R. Hutchison of the Development Department of the Eastman Kodak Company. The book is well conceived, clearly written, and profusely illustrated. Since the field of ballistocardiography is so complex and controversial, this reviewer was frankly surprised that he could find little with which to disagree.

JOHN R. BRAUNSTEIN
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