

BOOK REVIEWS

✓ **Browne, S. G.** *The Diagnosis and Management of Early Leprosy for Medical Practitioners*, The Leprosy Mission, 50 Portland Place, London WIN 3DG, 1975, 35 pp, illustrated.

This little book, intended for general medical practitioners who may encounter leprosy in their practice, is one of a series on "Leprosy Today" being published by The Leprosy Mission for free distribution. Written with great clarity, its pages distil the experience and wisdom for which Dr. Browne is renowned. The emphasis throughout is on *early* leprosy, the recognition of which is described comprehensively and in detail, while an important section of the book describes the management of leprosy in its early stages. There are four pages of colored photographs illustrating early leprosy lesions.

This book should be in the hands of every doctor working in countries where English is spoken and leprosy is endemic.—T. F. Davey (*From Trop. Dis. Bull.*)

Hansen, G. A. *The Memories and Reflections of Dr. Gerhard Armauer Hansen*, G. A. Hansen, translation, F. B. Watt, foreword, Wurzburg, W. Germany: German Leprosy Relief Association, Dominikanerplatz 4, 1976, 135 pp, photographs, English. Price US\$5.50, Can.\$5.50, DM 14,50. Also printed in French: *Les mémoires de Hansen*, Quebec, Canada: Les Presses de L'Université du Quebec, C.P. 250, Succursale N, Montreal, H2X 3M4, 1976, 130 pp, photographs.

These French and English presentations are valuable additions to the literature relating to G. A. Hansen particularly since they present his own reflections. Both books are prefaced by a well written discussion placing these reflections in their historical setting. This is by Frederick B. Watt. The English version also includes a brief introduction by Dr. Laszlo Kato entitled "Reflections on the Reflections of Hansen."

Both books are nicely illustrated by photographs in the collection of Dr. Kato including reproductions from his collection of postage stamps relating to Hansen and leprosy. The illustrations in the two books are for the most part not the same, the French version being

more fully illustrated and having more photographs from the life of Hansen. For this reason the reviewer is pleased to have both copies. The publication of these two volumes was designed to coincide with the opening of the Hansen Pavilion of the Institute Armand-Frappier.—Olaf K. Skinsnes

Job, C. K., Selvapandian, A. J. and Kurian, P. V. *Leprosy—Diagnosis and Management*, 2nd edit., New Delhi, India: Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh, 1 Red Cross Road, New Delhi-110001, 1975, 93 pp, illustrations. Price Rs.15/- for hardbound copy, and Rs.10/- for paperback.

This booklet of 93 pages with an additional 16 pages of photographs is a second edition of a work meant to be a concise book for medical practitioners and medical students who are interested in the study of leprosy. It should also be useful for paramedical workers. The 23 chapters present brief summaries of most subjects related to the practical care and understanding of leprosy, presenting such topics as epidemiology, immunology, medical management, visceral lesions, prophylaxis and control, physiotherapy and deformities. The illustrations relate primarily to deformities, after first presenting characteristic leprosy cases and histopathologies of leprosy types.

In short summaries of this type each author and reviewer will have differences of opinion of what should be included. This reviewer primarily wishes that since the book is intended for medical practitioners and medical students it would have been valuable to include some references for further information.—Olaf K. Skinsnes

Kapoor, P. *Guide to Leprosy and Leprosy Control*, Poona, India: Dr. J. M. Mehta, President, Poona District Leprosy Committee, 593/2, Rasta Peth, Poona-411 011, 1975, 82 pp, no photographs, available in hardbound and paperback copies. Price not available.

This convenient well-printed small book is primarily designed to assist field workers such as paramedical workers and medical officers who are not trained in leprosy and who have no experience in leprosy control.

It presents 28 chapters, essentially in outline form giving a guide for the handling of many problems associated with the care of leprosy patients. A few unusual topics are included, such as the chapters on "When to Refer a Case" and "Measures to Get Leprosy Patients in Early Stages."

This little book should prove very valuable for its intended purpose.—Olaf K. Skinsnes

McNeill, William H. *Plagues and Peoples*, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976, 369 pp. Price US\$10.00.

The thesis postulated and exemplified in this work is that many major historical events have been related to disease patterns. The author divides epidemic patterns into three main types: some occurring when people from cooler, relatively parasite-free climates migrate to warmer, humid, parasite-rich areas; others develop from global trade spread of infection to new, vulnerable areas; the third relates to infections such as chicken pox and measles which require a high population density for their persistence because they are passed from human to human without intermediate vectors.

Leprosy is discussed briefly in several areas of the book. Despite advice to the contrary, the author occasionally uses the word

"leper" and also speculates that the decline of leprosy in Europe resulted from competition from tuberculosis which he presumes to have produced sufficient cross immunity to have had a significant inhibitory effect. Alternatively, he speculates that yaws was classified as leprosy by medieval physicians and that with the recognition of syphilis, yaws was removed from its leprosy context. As a final hypothesis he speculates that a change in weather and related social conditions led to less "huddling" for warmth, the greater availability of adequate clothing, and thus less skin to skin contact and less opportunity for the transmission of leprosy.

It seems evident that, with respect to leprosy, the author comes to no firmer understanding of its decline than have the many others who have sought an answer to this problem.

It is also evident that, despite some acknowledged medical consultation, this eminent historian produces many concepts of disease that would be approached differently by a medical historian. Nevertheless, the book is interesting as a broad attempt to elucidate a valid and very interesting subject and plans in one volume many concepts for discussion and further investigation.—Olaf K. Skinsnes