

Book Reviews

A Syllabus of Laboratory Examinations in Clinical Diagnosis. Pages 496. Price \$4.50. Harvard University Press, Randall Hall, Cambridge, Mass.

An entirely new approach to the writing of textbooks on laboratory medicine has been made in this book edited by Dr. Thomas Hale Ham, of Harvard Medical School, and written by more than 30 active clinical investigators.

The subtitle, "Critical Evaluation of Laboratory Procedures in the Study of the Patient," is an accurate statement of its general character. In the introduction the authors have come face to face with the statistical facts of life as applied to laboratory medicine, and have summarized in an excellent manner some of the sources and the magnitude of the errors involved in the various common determinations. The concept that all laboratory determinations must be admitted to have a certain amount of error has been kept in mind throughout the book and is largely responsible for the intelligent appraisal of the various tests.

In addition to a sound evaluation of the errors involved in the various tests, the authors have been unusually successful in describing some of the vital facts which are usually omitted but which skilled technicians know are essential to good results. This is particularly true in the section on hematology.

In concentrating on the more common every-day tests being conducted in medical laboratories, it has naturally been necessary to make some of the sections very brief; for example, leukemia is disposed of in approximately one page. However, it is stated in the introduction that a companion volume will be available entitled, "A Color Atlas of Morphologic Hematology with a Guide to Technique and Clinical Diagnosis," by Geneva A. Daland, edited by Thomas Hale Ham, M.D., color plates by Etta Piotti, published by Harvard University Press. There are many original tables which would appear to be invaluable in aiding students and physicians to understand the significance of the results obtained in the various tests, and a bibliography which is unusually complete and well chosen.

It is the opinion of the reviewer that this is one of the most significant books in the field of laboratory medicine since the publication of Peter and Van Slyke's "Quantitative Clinical Chemistry." It is hoped that future editions of this book will be reproduced in a somewhat more permanent binding and with standard type.

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Accident Handbook. Compiled by members of the staff of the Children's Hospital, Boston. Price, 25 cents. Pp. 24. The Children's Medical Center, Inc., 300 Longwood Ave., Boston 15, 1950.

The Children's Hospital, a unit of the Children's Medical Center, of Boston, has recently issued a new type of accident handbook for parents of children. This publication was brought about because accidents are "one of the leading causes of death and an outstanding cause of permanent and disabling injuries among children." Home accidents, according to the National Safety Council, account for more than 2/5 of all these accidental deaths.

Many children are brought to the Children's Hospital because of home accidents, and the public relations department of the hospital and the staff have compiled this 24 page booklet with two purposes in mind—"to serve as a guide to the elimination of possible hazards in the home and to offer immediate help in the handling of accidental injuries should they occur." It is not intended to be a pamphlet on first aid, but it does contain brief directions as to *What to Do* and *What Not to Do* in case of injury.

The booklet takes up, in eight sections, eight important injuries of children, with a tab index for each item—head injuries, burns, poisons, cuts, fractures, bites, convulsions and foreign bodies. Included in the small booklet are small pertinent illustrations and several paragraphs in each of the above sections, telling the parents what to do and—fully as important—what not to do. The directions are all brief and to the point.

The booklet includes a short list of items to keep on hand for use in case of accidents. There is also a safety check list with which parents may check the dangerous points in their homes. Furthermore, the booklet has a perforated corner for a string so that it may be hung near the telephone. Space is also provided on the back cover for the telephone numbers of doctor, druggist, fire and police departments, hospital and taxi.