

Did the first constructors of an arch, one wonders, derive the idea of laying stones with progressively narrowed bases together from the backbones of the animals which had been killed for their food? It is usual to talk about the vertebral column, but we might just as well call the spine a series of four arches, with successive narrowing and broadening of the anterior and posterior surfaces of the individual vertebrae and their connecting discs to form them.

What wonder is it if, with all the stresses of growth, of gradual assumption of the erect posture and of the carrying of weights additional to that of the head and body itself, either the curves of the spine or the joints of the spine with the limbs sometimes come short of perfection or lose their proper relations during later life? Some spinal defects are congenital (Law, 1953), some are due to disease, but most are due to postural faults or overloading, and thus are preventable, by proper care of the infant, the child, the adolescent and the worker in industry.

Law, A. (1953). "Vertebral Column—Injuries and Diseases." In *British Encyclopaedia of Medical Practice*, 2nd edition, p. 610. London: Butterworth.

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## BOOK REVIEW

THE PRINCIPLES OF EXERCISE THERAPY by M. Dena Gardiner, M.C.S.P., 260 p.p., 193 Figs., Published by G, Bell & Sons, Ltd., York House, Portugal Street, London, W.C.2. Price 21s. net.

This is a book which physiotherapists have needed for years. Miss Gardiner is most qualified to write a book of this nature, since she has the Diploma of Bedford Physical Training College and is a Physiotherapy teacher.

The principles underlying movement of joints and muscles are clearly and fully explained. We are then given detailed techniques for mobilising joints and strengthening muscles. Although most of the text refers to active exercises, as naturally this forms the largest part of exercise therapy, the uses of static muscle work and of passive exercises are explained fully. Every joint in the body has specific movements described for it, both for mobilizing and strengthening.

The text is profusely illustrated with excellent clear diagrams. The clarity of the text is striking, and includes a very useful chapter on instruction of the patient.

This is quite the best of the very few books published on this important subject, and it must be recommended not only to students but to physiotherapists and everyone interested in this vital aspect of our work.

L.D.

LIVING WITH A DISABILITY by Howard A. Rusk, M.D. and Eugene J. Taylor, published by The Blakiston Company Inc., Garden City, New York. Price \$3.50.

Howard A. Rusk and Eugene J. Taylor, respectively Director and Assistant Professor of the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of the New York University—Bellevue Medical Centre, have done a great service to all disabled persons by writing this book. They have collected together information about gadgets and devices for assisting these people in everyday activities so that they can become as independent as possible.

The book is extremely well illustrated by photographs, plans and diagrams of the various devices all with an accompanying description of them. Some would have to be made in Orthopaedic and Hospital workshops, but others are simple enough to be made at home.

This is primarily a book for the disabled person himself, but it is an invaluable asset to any physiotherapist, since it is essentially one of our important aims that we help disabled people to become as self sufficient as they can.

Included in the book is a very useful chart listing various daily activities whereby one can assess a patient's disabilities. It would of course also act as a useful incentive and form of encouragement for the patient to be able to strike out his own particular disabilities as he learns to master them.

"Living With a Disability" was sent to us by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and we are grateful to the Foundation for introducing to us such a well planned, useful and attractively produced book.

L.D.