



CLINICAL REVIEWS  
OF THE  
PITTSBURGH DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

GUIDEPOSTS TO MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS  
AND TREATMENT

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## PREFACE

WITH the rapid strides of medical progress in recent years, an ever-increasing avalanche of new scientific facts has swept in, and a constantly widening stream of periodical medical literature. Some of these advances have related to the fundamental, more or less academic phases of medicine, others largely to its clinical aspects. Manifestly, it is impossible for any one to follow closely enough the constantly accelerating progress in medicine advancing on so many fronts. With the purpose of presenting the practical features of advancing medical knowledge in condensed and readable form, the Pittsburgh Diagnostic Clinic began, in 1931, the publication of a series of brief expository reviews on selected medical subjects.

Always the requirements of the general practitioner have been kept in mind, the consistent intention being to present a summary, critically analyzed, of what we regard as accepted present-day medical concepts. In adhering to the ideal of simplicity and practicability, research details have been eliminated, and controversial matters avoided as much as possible.

Much of detail which would be important, in fact invaluable, in a work of reference was discarded as trivial in face of the need to stress fundamentals, to reveal the very kernel of the subject, as it were. For that reason the essays comprising this volume are not designed to supplant works of reference on the subjects treated here, and will not do so. Rather, we aimed to present new guideposts in modern medical diagnosis and treatment, through brief expositions of currently accepted views. Our aim at simplicity was projected even to the style of presentation: the simple essay form. For the same reason, we generally avoided specific reference in the text to the many original sources of medical literature from which many valuable data were culled, realizing that for those interested in the details of any given topic there

is at hand today a plethora of works of reference and of simple guides to periodical literature. Only a few selected bibliographic references are therefore appended to each article. And so, in purpose and presentation, each number of *Clinical Reviews* has been, in essay form, designed to meet the requirements of bedside practice.

Although we appreciate the value of extensive bibliographic appendices and, of course, also of exhaustive presentations on medical topics, we have good reason to say in justification of our own mode of presentation that many of the articles included here would miss their mark if they were not stripped to the essential factual and clinical truths that we aimed to point out. And if it may be deplored that medical literature be surveyed on the run, so to speak, it is better that it be so than that it be passed by altogether. If this collection of essays "makes itself read" it will have justified amply the present aims of the editor.

The choice of topic subjects was dictated largely by their usefulness to those who would apply the concepts presented in every-day practice. Therefore, unless there was urgent reason to do otherwise, common conditions were discussed more often than the rare, and those about which there has been reason to shift our point of view, in the light of recent data and experience, more often than those others that maintained their status quo.

Even in so brief an interval as that between the original writing of the earlier articles in this series, in 1931, and the present, new facts have sprung up which may be applied helpfully in every-day diagnosis and treatment. This has necessitated thorough revision of most of the articles, so that all of them may be as complete in essential detail as possible.

A word about deviation from traditional practice in a book on general medicine: if giving first place to a discussion of functional nervous disturbances seems a bit heretical, our justification lies in the need for emphasizing their importance.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to many

who have contributed to the making of this book. To Dr. R. R. Snowden, I am especially grateful for encouraging the writing of these reviews and for his many helpful criticisms and advice on many occasions. I am indebted to my collaborators for the sections they contributed. To Mrs. T. D. Howe, who has so carefully read and criticized the complete manuscript, I acknowledge my grateful thanks. I am also indebted to Mr. Paul A. Webb, of the Pittsburgh Diagnostic Clinic, for his help in getting the manuscript in shape for publication.

H. M. MARGOLIS

*Pittsburgh, Pa.*

*March 1937*

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