

The Human Foot:

its Evolution, Physiology and Functional Disorders. By Prof. D. J. Morton. Pp. xiii+244+14 plates. (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1935.) 15s. net.

THE author of this book, though he bears the name, is not responsible for the designation which we know as Morton's metatarsalgia. The most important statement in the book is that the disabilities of the foot start in the first instance from defects of the bones and ligaments. The evidence for this statement is assembled from diverse sources.

Approximately one third of the book is devoted to an account of the evolution of the foot. This is quite interestingly and well done, and is in accordance with the prevailing ideas at the moment. It is inevitable that its truth should be more general than particular. From gaps in our knowledge, detailed speculation as to the way individual muscles may have changed to meet new functional demands must remain speculative and have little value as proof. From his evolutionary studies, the author arrives at the conclusion that the foot has become a coherent elastic arched contrivance in which bone and ligament differ only in calcium impregnation, but otherwise are short or long trabeculae answering to the stresses and strains imposed upon them. The muscles have but to balance the legs and the body upon the foot.

The analysis of the postural and locomotory activities of the foot but bear out this contention, and the disabilities of the foot are of course interpreted in the same way. In the examination of nurses and students, the author estimated the power of the muscles in those who had static change of the foot and found this the same in those who had no such disabilities. The opposing view asserts that in the maintenance of the configuration of the foot the muscles stand in the first line of defence; the ligaments are resistances invoked against external forces only after the muscles have failed. The reflex postural activity of muscles maintains not only the equilibrium of the body but also the form of the foot. It is the penetration of this conception into the practice of orthopaedics that has elevated its teaching and enhanced its results. The work of British medicine in bringing this about has been very considerable, and it has become widely adopted elsewhere. The problem at issue is one of clinical investigation and cannot be settled by appeals to a more or less speculative evolutionary background.

A National Encyclopædia of Educational Films and 16 mm. Apparatus available in Great Britain, 1936
Edited by William L. Lally. Pp. 479+7 plates. (London: The Central Information Bureau for Educational Films, Ltd., 1937.) 15s.

THIS is a new, enlarged, and again improved edition of a work first published under its present name in 1935 but really dating back to 1933. The improvement—and it is an immense improvement—consists in the inclusion first of a film title index giving reference to both 35-mm. sound and silent and 16-mm.

sound and silent films, and secondly, of a new subject index to the main classification. The first meets a criticism which we made of the first edition that there was no possibility of direct reference to any specific film when the title was known, and the second enables us to find films that deal with any particular topic. The encyclopædia is now in fact usable without a great expenditure of energy and temper.

Although it is now possible to trace films, the process is not even yet quite so simple as it might be. If we wish to obtain a film on a particular subject, we first turn to the subject index and choose a name. Then we look up this name in the index to titles. Perhaps we were unlucky, but when we looked up 'Cacao-Trinidad' and 'Cocoa from Trinidad' we could find neither. If the name is given, we find whether it is 35-mm. sound or silent or 16-mm. sound or silent, and on what page further particulars are given. We turn to that page, identify the film and find the source of supply and its length. 'Identify' is the word to be used, for when we looked up "Hop Gardens of Kent" as given on the title index, we found "Hoplands" not on the page named but the next. Nor is this the sole example of transmutation of titles.

The lengths are still given in reels. This is not quite satisfactory; for it makes a great difference to the suitability of the film whether it runs for 7 or 15 minutes. But this, with some other matters, can be attended to in future editions. It is a great advance to have a catalogue that is usable.

Grundlagen, Methoden und Ziele der Hygiene:

eine Einführung für Mediziner und Naturwissenschaftler, Volkswirtschaftler und Techniker. Von Prof. Dr. Werner Kollath. Pp. xvii+508. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1937.) 18 gold marks.

THE preface declares that this book is intended as an introduction to hygiene for the student of medicine and also as a stimulus for the interested layman to introduce hygienic methods wherever this may be possible. The plan of the book is good in that the first part is devoted to the scientific foundations of hygiene, the association of physics and chemistry with biology and of biology with medicine. Subsequent parts deal with environmental hygiene, with nutrition, with medical statistics and public health organization, and the last part with bacteriology and serology.

The book, however, is too ambitious in trying to cover too much in five hundred pages. Balance is not maintained, the writing being either too discursive or too laconic. Twenty-three pages are devoted to atomic physics, ten pages to oxidation-reduction potentials, but immunology is accorded only nine and medical statistics only thirteen pages. Epidemiology receives only passing mention, and even the problems of milk-borne infections are dismissed by giving an incomplete list of the diseases which may be spread by milk. The bibliography makes mention of a number of text-books and gives references to fifty-six papers on a large variety of subjects by the author himself. The book is not likely to appeal to the English reader.