mortality and morbidity will find something of interest here and will be infected by the spirit of inquiry which is best caught in the introductory remarks to one of the papers on birth asphyxia: 'It is interesting that we as paediatricians have interests which seem to be going farther and farther back in utero, while the obstetricians extend farther and farther, and rightly so, into the follow-up period after birth. Yet there is still perhaps not enough blending of the specialties.'

Librarians and secretaries of medical societies should make a particular note of this book and of the fact that copies of the original tapes may be had on loan from Smith, Klein and French who sponsored the recording of the conference.

Morbus Haemolyticus Neonatorum im ABO-System.

The frequency of ABO incompatibility between mother and baby resulting in haemolytic disease of the baby is estimated at about 0.5% of all deliveries. This of itself is probably sufficient justification for yet another addition to the growing number of publications on the subject; although fortunately very few cases are of such severity as to require active treatment.

Dr. Fischer has summarized most of the known facts of haemolytic disease in ABO incompatibilities and compiled a comprehensive bibliography in an attractive and commendably short book of fewer than 100 pages.

Many of the diagrams used are of a rather rudimentary character, e.g. that of page 28. They add little to the script and one wonders if perhaps some at least could have been omitted.

A great deal of emphasis is laid on the demonstration of the Direct Coombs test in these cases and a new technique is described which, it is claimed, will disclose almost all cases of ABO affected infants.

While of academic interest, this is of very limited clinical significance, since the result of the test, positive or negative, is unlikely to influence treatment to any extent. The paediatrician will still be guided by the clinical condition of the baby and the degree of bilirubinaemia irrespective of the result of the Coombs test. Indeed, Dr. Fischer himself makes this point in his section on treatment.

The value of the test is further limited by the fact that since it is done on the baby's blood, it can give no prenatal information as to the probability of serious disease at birth.

Antenatal prediction is covered by the author's ingenious but somewhat laborious AB γ globulin neutralization test, but it is feared that few laboratories in this country at any rate could devote the time required for the technique described. In any case this test has been largely superseded by the use of pig erythrocytes in a much simpler and more rapid test (Tovey et al. (1962). Brit. J. Haemat., 8, no. 3. July).

It is not to be expected that a book devoted entirely to such a highly specialized subject would enjoy a wide circulation; but it should find a place in the libraries of paediatric and obstetric units and in laboratories engaged in blood-group serology.


The opening sentence of this book runs 'In 1928 the senior authors have published a "Clinical Haematology of Childhood"'. What a flood of memories were loosed on the reviewer by this simple sentence: memories of battling with the German of the 1928 book, soon to be joined by those of battling with the English of the present one, memories of Henry Baar himself, and above all of his prodigious intellect and grasp of his favourite specialty, among many, of haematology.

Baar and Stransky have been joined by Stella Baar and, for the last few pages, by Keith Rogers, to produce a new, and more monumental than usual, account of the errors and pitfalls into which the haematological processes of children may stray. There have been several textbooks of paediatric haematology in recent years, each perhaps fulfilling a need for somebody and each having its own particular merits. The particular merit of the present book is its compendium-like completeness, the thoroughness with which every facet of the subject is covered, all in 902 pages, and the authoritative manner of presentation. Truly this is a textbook, not likely to be found on the laboratory bench but almost certain to find a place on every haematologist's bookshelves, to be frequently consulted in the elucidation of knotty problems and the preparation of advanced lectures.

Baar, lately of Birmingham, now writes from the United States, Stella Baar and Rogers from Birmingham, England, and Stransky from the Philippines. Investigation of references in the text to St. Baar showed not that the senior author was being in any way anticipatory, but that Stella was being differentiated from him.

Any attempt to evaluate this book would be like trying to evaluate 100%—it is so complete. To read the shortest section leaves one with a feeling of mental breathlessness; and after considerable reading one is forced to the conclusion that the haematology of childhood can be made to appear a most formidable discipline.


This book immediately appeals for several reasons. In the first place it fills a rare gap in the overcrowded bookshelves of today's medical literature. This aspect of gynaecology heretofore has presumably been thought to be covered satisfactorily in brief chapters in medical and surgical paediatric textbooks, and perhaps a little more fully in those of ordinary gynaecology. The

The discovery of a treatment for phenylketonuria means that paediatrics can never be quite the same again. Every newborn baby must be regarded as a potential case and every backward child as perhaps treatable. The implications of this quiet revolution will be obvious and familiar to all who bear responsibility for the health of children: the details of this rare disorder may not be so well known. A new monograph appears at an opportune moment, therefore.

The book consists of contributions by a number of distinguished American and European workers. If there is little between its appropriately green covers that cannot be found by searching the literature, it fulfills a useful function in bringing together in truly authoritative fashion all that is known about the condition. It starts with the history of one of the great scientific discoveries of modern times, an exciting story that deserves to be better known. There are chapters on incidence and genetics, the clinical picture, the various aspects of pathology, management, the experimental approach with suggestions for further research and a comprehensive bibliography of 641 references in the world literature.

This book sets a high standard in presentation and production. If the reviewer focuses his main attention on the chapters on diets and management, it is because they are likely to be the preoccupation of paediatricians. The detailed diets and the recipes for making them palatable are particularly useful. There are tables to show the minute composition of the commercial phenylalanine-restricted preparations and the phenylalanine content of normal foods, the latter with some unfortunate omissions. The reader may be interested to know about Cornetti, Cheezits and Sugar Smacks. He will search the list in vain, however, for chicken, turkey, duck or any kind of fish. Management is made to look a little too easy, as perhaps it is in the hands of Professor Bickel and Dr. Gruter. They refer to the hazards of treatment, but some elaboration here would improve the chapter.

In the section on Tests and Reagents, Dr. L. I. Woolf gives a careful review of the methods for determining the blood phenylalanine, the essential investigation in the assessment of the progress of a treated case. It is perhaps unfortunate that the serum amino-oxidase, probably now the most generally acceptable method, is mentioned in outline only. This sort of thing is inevitable in a monograph on an expanding subject. Clinical biochemists must be well accustomed to having to revise their methods and will not be particularly disappointed.

With these minor reservations, the book can be recommended to paediatricians, pathologists and dietitians.


Dr. McLaren has given us a well-documented and richly illustrated survey of this most important aspect of medicine, backed by a comprehensive bibliography, and indices for authors and subjects. Anyone who seeks to write authoritatively about malnutrition in relation to disorders of the eye and its adnexa, must devote many years to the clinical investigation of such disorders in various lands, but that is not all. His knowledge must be based upon sound anatomical, physiological and embryological studies. He must pursue numerous animal experiments and engage in intensive study of the enormous relevant literature.

In all these respects Dr. McLaren is well qualified to teach us, and he has made abundant use of his opportunities, always trying to steer clear of artificial simplification. He is well aware that controlled laboratory experiments, important though they assuredly are, will give rise to many a fallacy if their results are cited as interpretations of human disease. The great nutritional scourges of mankind are so often the outcome of multiple factors, nor is it always easy to assess the relative responsibility of nutritional and genetic factors in teratomatous lesions.

Dr. McLaren is to be congratulated for accomplishing so notable a task, and his book is delightfully easy to read. A second edition is likely to be called for within a few years, and its preparation will be an exacting task, because the implications of malnutrition upon the eye are so diverse and so swiftly changing.