BOOK REVIEWS


Having unwrapped the parcel, the reviewer must admit to a groan as he contemplated what he thought was just another book on the 'welfare' infant. His fears were unfounded. It is true that there is a good deal of material on growth and development, infant feeding, vitamins, and so on, but they are all treated much more thoughtfully and with less evangelism than usual. The advantages of breast feeding are an article of faith with British paediatricians, and Professor Illingworth displays this well but with reason and humanity in place of bigotry and with space to include the few disadvantages. He is exceptionally well read, and one suspects occasionally that a reference has been included for completeness, because there is a card in an index, but in general this inclusive tendency leads only to a fair discussion of all major aspects of the subject. Some authors leave the reader to work out his own conclusions, but Professor Illingworth finally sums up his reading, modified by his experience, and tells you what he thinks.

Recent textbooks deal well with clear-cut diseases, but much of paediatrics is concerned with disturbances of behaviour and development. Psychiatry can claim some successes in the grosser abnormalities, but in considering minor disorders which are important to parents (such as insomnia or masturbation), one is accustomed to ignore the new volumes with their intact dust covers and go straight to the well-thumbed Stills. Many paediatricians will probably now first pick up Illingworth's slim volume, flipping the pages over as they scan their page headings: accident prevention, keeping the child busy, toys and play, shyness, thumb sucking, breath-holding attacks, refusal of food, effect of hospital, discipline, favouritism, etc. This book fills a need.


For a considerable time rumours of a longitudinal growth study of children in Aberdeen have been periodically reaching the fastnesses of the South. Now, at last, come the documents; and they make up for the lateness of their appearance by their unsurpassed completeness. This book consists of the actual raw measurements of 66 boys and 60 girls taken at 3 days old, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 years. The measurements were all made by the late Professor Alexander Low, and the publication appears over the hands of Miss A. M. Clark, Mr. M. H.

Quenonille and Professor R. D. Lockhart. We are most indebted to them, measurer and publishers alike, for, although one can never be sure of this sort of data without a little mathematical analysis, on the face of it these appear to be the best records of bodily growth from birth to 5 years yet published anywhere. Eight measurements of the head and face, and 13 of the body, are given; and there are no gaps in the data. A minor criticism is that stature and sitting height were taken with the child lying down from birth to 3 years (crown-heel and crown-rump lengths) but erect from 3 to 5. The result is that the increment from 3 to 4 is too low, the lying values for these measurements always being the larger. This throws into relief one of the many difficulties of longitudinal studies, that of maintaining constancy of methods over long periods of time, or providing duplication over an adequate period if advances in technique simply cannot be denied.

Information on age of parents, pregnancy number, date of cutting first tooth, bottle or breast feeding, number of teeth at 1, 2 and 3 years and size of fontanelle is also given. The children were born between 1923 and 1927, so the records give us a picture of growth rate during the decade 1923-32. Unfortunately the social and economic background of the homes is not mentioned. Enthusiasts of the biometry of growth will find much in this data to extract, and it is to be hoped they will sharpen their calculators carefully, for Professor Low's patient, unspectacular and persistent labours deserve well of them.


This is a valuable collation of the published data on the yield and the protein, fat, sugar and minerals of human milk. It is made from the point of view of a laboratory milk chemist, and as no dairy industry has been founded with women as chief producers, most of this interesting information is not of immediate practical usefulness to clinicians.

The variations in milk composition between different healthy women and from time to time in individual women are well brought out. In practice we deal with a nursing couple and we assume, probably rightly, that the composition of the milk produced by the mother, although variable, is suitable for the infant and hence what matters is the volume. The various reports on milk yield are not well digested here, chiefly because it is not made clear that figures from test weighings are not comparable with figures from expression of milk by hand or by pump. The failure to notice Waller's work (e.g. Nursing Mirror, Jan. 15 and 22, Feb. 12 and 19, 1949;
Lancet, 1950, I, 53) on residual milk obtainable by expression after the infant has fed, is extraordinary.

Waller's figures (Arch. Dis. Childh., 21, 1) for daily amounts of milk secreted on each of the first 13 days after delivery by two groups of 100 primiparae and a third group of 100 multiparae are not noted although certain daily volumes estimated by multiplying one milking by five are given. In Waller's work the babies of the multiparae took on an average 9 oz. of milk on the fourth day. A mean figure of 32 oz. obtained (by expression) from seven women on the fourth day is quoted with details of each woman's yield. This might have received more discussion for, if the babies average 7 lb., this is 4½ oz. per lb. body weight on the fourth day of life. Yet on page 9, in dealing with Roderuck's findings on variation in volume of milk at different stages of lactation, the author suggests that manual expression tends to reduce milk flow in the lying-in period. Surely the explanation of the observation that the daily milk yield by expression, on five successive days at 70, 160 and 300 days of lactation, increased from the beginning to the end of the test period is that the increased demand (or better emptying) led to rapid increase of output. This explanation would have sprung to the author's mind if he had studied Budin (Budin, P.C., 1907, 'The Nursling'). Is it worth seeing 'a general tendency' in the yields obtained for three primiparae compared with three multiparae and is it 'safe to assume' that all the subjects in a home for unmarried mothers are primiparae? Some girls never learn.

There are many questions on which the author might have collected and criticized available information. Our practice in this field of medicine is largely by rule of thumb but there may be more information available than we know. For example, much public money is spent on cotton seed oil as a galactagogue. The author has collected evidence that increasing fluid intake does not increase milk output. Is this true about other reputed agents? Are prolactin preparations efficacious?

It may well be that the author has thought of the problem only from the dairy chemist's point of view, but the field worker is interested also in the efficiency of breast feeding by various nursing couples. Is the incidence of successful breast feeding for say, six months, correlated with the yield in the early days of lactation? Is the quality of good lactation transmitted by the male as in the bovine species?

Though it is not comprehensive, this is a useful book, well made and reasonably priced. We still need a book combining chemical knowledge with results known from dairy research and clinical observations on breast feeding in the human species.


In this monograph a clinician, a geneticist and a morbid anatomist join forces to describe and analyse a series of 116 cases of fibrocystic disease of the pancreas seen at The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. They conclude that, far from being simply a pancreatic lesion, this is a pluriglandular disease genetically determined and characterized by the secretion of abnormal mucus. On this conception it is unlikely to be curable, but general supportive and anti-infective treatment has led to a much better survival rate than was seen a decade ago.

The biggest section of the book is devoted to a study of the morbid histology of the disease, and a wealth of tables and photomicrographs of an outstanding order illustrate and clarify the points made by the authors in a fashion that even the rustiest histologist cannot fail to appreciate. There are tables of biochemical findings and short summaries of all the cases, and the book ends with a short chapter on other pancreatic dysplasias.

It is desirable that from time to time apparently new or at least unrecognized conditions should be the subject of an authoritative description and discussion, and a warm welcome will be assured in paediatric circles for the present volume.


This is not—nor is it meant to be—a comprehensive and authoritative treatise on the subject of vomiting in babies. The author sets out to question certain generally accepted and often empirical views on the subject and to advocate more detailed clinical analysis and more frequent use of radiological investigation. Largely as a result of adopting such principles it has become possible of recent years to separate from the heterogeneous group of babies with vomiting of uncertain origin—often classified as habitual vomiting—certain clearly defined syndromes. Many of these are the result of specific anatomical defects. Commensurate with a better understanding of the underlying pathology a more rational and effective treatment has become possible. One such example is afforded by the partial thoracic stomach. This condition is well reviewed, although the method illustrated for propping up an infant seems, at first sight, to carry a possible risk of strangulation! By contrast, however, other affections, notably diaphragmatic hernia and intestinal obstructions, are discussed extremely sketchily and there would appear to be little merit for their inclusion in this book. Other subjects considered include pylorospasm, certain aspects relating to the aetiology and treatment of pyloric stenosis, duodenal obstruction and vomiting occasioned by the compression and displacement of the stomach secondary to a distended, gas-filled transverse colon. Many views expressed on treatment and aetiology are controversial but serve possibly to stimulate discussion. Radiographic illustrations are of variable quality.

Although there is an extensive bibliography its value is considerably reduced by the failure to include many references made in the text. These too are often inaccurate and the spelling of authors' names frequently variable and incorrect.