Roentgen Diagnosis of Abdominal Tumours in Childhood.

This is a book which contains useful advice on the interpretation of radiographs of the abdomen in childhood, and for the most part the advice is based on straightforward radiography, either without a contrast medium or simply with a barium meal or enema or an intravenous pyelogram.

This is just the sort of help which the paediatrician or surgeon would welcome, but the book is poorly written in the sense that it is difficult to read, and also contains a lot of trite phrases which do nothing but produce irritation in the reader, e.g. 'There is much to be said for making an attempt to make a diagnosis before surgery'. As an example of obscurity or unhappy phraseology we have the following: 'As, with the exception of haemangiomata, other tumours of the liver do not show calcification, its presence is an important differential point'.

The book is a curious mixture of first class material well arranged in a very practical way, and the overstatement of the obvious. 'Many possible avenues of approach can be used: the division into solid and cystic, into neoplastic, congenital, traumatic and inflammatory. The neoplastic can further be subdivided into benign and malignant'. This sort of statement may be all right in a textbook for nurses, but to spend time and space on it in a book 'intended for radiologists, paediatricians and surgeons interested in the preoperative diagnosis of tumours of childhood' detracts from its other very obviously good points. To have 52 first-class radiographs illustrating the problems of diagnosis of tumours in childhood available in a compact book of this sort is fine. For this reason it is a good reference book to have in a hospital library, provided one does not expect much help from the written portion.


The appearance of the first edition of Recent Advances in Paediatrics in 1954 filled a notable gap in British paediatric literature providing, as it did, in a relatively small compass, a survey and a balanced appraisal of the current state of knowledge of many aspects of paediatrics in which notable advances had been made in the preceding decade. The second edition will undoubtedly be no less welcome, for its aim and general plan are the same and the standard of its predecessor is amply maintained.

The content of the present volume is, of course, entirely new and the subjects have been chosen 'to display the growing edge of paediatrics today, the theoretical interest as well as the practical importance of a subject entering into the choice'. The first chapter on changes in the circulation at birth and the effects of asphyxia ranges widely over the field of animal physiology, from which much light has been shed in recent years on the darkness which still clouds our vision of the rapidly changing physiological scene during the first hours and days of independent existence. This is in many ways the most interesting and stimulating chapter in the book and of peculiar value in that it summarizes recent work in a field which is of vital importance to us as paediatricians but which few of us can hope to cover successfully in the original literature.

The selection of subjects is again admirable for on all of them there is something new to say and in several the time is clearly ripe for stock taking. It has become clear in recent years that the aetiology of jaundice in the newborn is more diverse than we had suspected and the two chapters devoted to this subject present a clear picture of the present position. Spina bifida cystica and hydrocephalus remain among the more difficult problems of infancy but considerable technical advances have recently been made in their management and it is useful to have here a definitive statement based on a wide experience of both conditions. The chapter on hypothyroidism is a fine illustration of how careful study of a few cases of a rare disorder can add to our understanding of a basic physiological process. The editor himself is responsible for the chapter on the haematology of infancy, a subject to which he has made considerable contributions: a large part of this chapter is devoted to the details of iron metabolism and haemopoiesis which are not elsewhere readily available with reference to this particular age period.

Other chapters deal with physical growth, the nephrotic syndrome, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, the deaf child and pyrogenic osteitis, and a remarkably high standard is maintained in all of them.

There is an ample selection of references at the end of each chapter and the index is both accurate and adequate. This can be thoroughly recommended as a well written and well produced book of wide interest and usefulness and the editor and his associates are to be congratulated on their valiant efforts to keep us up to date.


This is a doctorate thesis presented in the Faculty of Science of the University of Paris. The author works in Dakar and therefore his view can be taken to represent the French school of thought on kwashiorkor. He cites, however, nearly 300 references, has obviously read widely and he presents his own original observations against a sound background. One of his main interests seems to be in regard to the liver lesions of this widespread disorder with particular reference to the possible arrest of progress towards cirrhosis when an adequate protein intake is secured. The photographs of biopsy material are of varying quality.