

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Management of the Newborn**, 2nd ed. By ARTHUR H. PARMELEE. (Pp. 368; 47 figures. 64s., \$8.50.) London: Interscience Publishers. Chicago: Year Book Publishers. 1959.

The second edition of Professor Parmelee's charming book on what he himself calls the 'Story of the Newborn' retains much of its original form with newly written chapters on retrolental fibroplasia, oxygen therapy and staphylococcal infections, fairly extensive revision on material relating to hyaline membrane syndrome, resuscitation, and infants of diabetic mothers as well as considerable bringing up to date here and there throughout the book. Though not a textbook in the ordinary sense, and though a spate of books on the neonate have appeared since the first edition in 1952, this slim volume remains the most readable and perhaps the best book on its subject. It is not encyclopaedic but contains all and more that the student and the practitioner needs. Each subject is made to sound interesting because Professor Parmelee has chosen to write on subjects that have aroused his own interest and because he writes in English prose which is simple and lucid and in a very direct way reflects his own feelings and even his own senses. For instance, when describing local cyanosis he says 'light friction with the finger will often cause a normal pink colour to return to the cyanotic area but in a few minutes cyanosis again appears'; and in subcutaneous fat necrosis the areas 'feel not unlike buttons when grasped by their firm edges'; again, of a newly born infant 'the skin has a velvety softness more delicate than anything else I have ever felt'. This sort of personal writing, which might easily become embarrassing, is woven into the substance of the text in such a way as both to lighten its reading and illuminate his meaning.

As always in American books, the paper and printing and general get up is of a high standard.

**L'Hérédité en Ophtalmologie**. By JULES FRANÇOIS. (Pp. vii + 876; 629 figures. Fr. fr. 8,000.) Paris, Masson et C<sup>ie</sup>. 1958.

This is a most useful book. It is in four parts. The first gives a general account of mendelian genetics, and includes a chapter on elementary statistics. The second describes the general applications of genetics in ophthalmology: the recognition of discrete clinical entities from their genetic behaviour; the detection of carriers; the value of a knowledge of genetic risks in the early treatment of genetic disorder; genetic counselling and eugenic considerations. The third gives a full account of the disorders of the eye known to be genetically determined. The fourth describes the genetically determined syndromes in which the eye is also involved. It is the last which would be of most interest to paediatricians.

Each section is well illustrated, and the accounts of conditions where genetics are difficult, for example the errors of refraction, are well balanced. English-speaking medical practitioners already have a good text-book covering much the same ground to consult, Professor Sorsby's *Genetics in Ophthalmology*. This French book is more detailed, and contains a fuller list of references to the continental literature, so it will form a useful supplement.

**Le Mongolisme**. By ROBERT LÉCUYER. (Pp. 152. Fr. fr. 1,500.) Paris: G. Doin. 1958.

The study of mongolism has for some time reached a dead end and almost no new material factors have been added to our knowledge for over 30 or more years, while the only important change in the state of these curious children has been that for the most part they now survive into adult life. This painstaking monograph surveys the subject in a general way, and presents the principal problems of diagnosis, aetiology and treatment with considerable detail. The author brings with him 39 cases which help to enliven the rather dry, arid survey of the literature of which the monograph is almost entirely composed.

All the known factors are presented, and many of the better known fantasies about aetiology are also discussed. In the chapter on aetiology all theories break down against the irreducibly meagre, well established and ever verifiable factors of maternal age and the occurrence in both of monozygotic, but not of dizygotic, twins. The chapter on treatment is perhaps the most successful in this monograph and the author points out that since development in these children is in general slow and various phases are passed through slowly, and in particular the mongols' dependence on maternal care and affection and a happy family life is unduly prolonged so that he can suffer from deprivation, hospitalization, and the like for just so long as he remains a mental toddler; and that this may be well on into the seventh and eighth year or later. He claims that many of the difficulties, aggressiveness, uncouthness and lapses into imbecility, have their roots in unhappy childhood, and might have been avoided by greater sympathy and love.

Working in an institution the author nevertheless realizes the conditions there for mongols fall very far short of the optimum, and would like to see established some kind of organization for more home care and boarding out for them when they have the misfortune to be rejected by their parents. This is an important point to have made and one that should be appreciated by all those coming into contact with these unfortunate children. There is an extensive and useful bibliography.