ARCHIVES OF DISEASE IN CHILDHOOD

28 American research workers in the fields of anatomy, physiology, psychology, paediatrics, obstetrics and neurology.

There are 13 chapters concerned with the physiology, pathology, and effects of anoxia at or before birth in producing cerebral palsy and mental deficiency, two chapters devoted to the behaviour of infant monkeys and their breeding and care, and four to the recorded proceedings of round table conferences.

Of the greatest interest are those chapters concerned with experimental neonatal asphyxia in animals, mainly guinea-pigs. But species differences are such that more will be learned in relation to human problems by experimental studies on other primates, and Dr. Windle and his colleagues are now undertaking such investigations with Macaca monkeys established as a free living colony on the island of Santiago off Puerto Rico. To assess the effects of neonatal asphyxia, special tests have had to be devised to measure intelligence and learning abilities in animals and these are described in relation to both guinea-pigs and monkeys.

This is an important book and could be read with profit by all concerned with problems of the newborn infant. Over 500 references are listed.

One minor protest must be entered. In his foreword Dr. E. Harold Hinnman deplores the fact that 3% of the population of the United States (that is, nearly 5 millions) are considered as mentally retarded. But, for as long as a mentally retarded person is defined as one whose intelligence is less than two standard deviations from the mean for the population, there will always be 3% of any population who are 'mentally retarded'. It would be as true to say, and as absurd to deplore, that 50% of the population was below average intelligence.


This is a monograph covering all aspects of the Guillain-Barré polyradiculitis, its history, clinical manifestations and complications, differential diagnosis, its multiple aetiology, its pathology and treatment. The work is well arranged and plentifully illustrated by case histories, and some 800 references are listed. Even in a monograph of this size some aspects of the subject receive scant attention. For instance, the important complication of raised intracranial pressure is discussed in one short paragraph, corticosteroid therapy is described by reference to the literature, but not apparently from personal experience, and the life-saving treatment of respiratory paralysis is allotted seven lines.

The original description of polyradiculitis with 'dissociation albumino-cytologique' in the cerebrospinal fluid was by G. Guillain, J. Barré and A. Strohl in 1916.

Why has Dr. Strohl not received eponymous fame?


This book or monograph is addressed, the preface tells us, to residents in the Blue Bird Circle Children's Clinic, Houston, Texas, and is based primarily on the collected experiences of the Clinic since its inception in 1949. It is in fact a simple and concise account of childhood convulsions and is admirably suited, as a bedside book, to final year students, house physicians and candidates for general medical and paediatric examinations. It is well written, beautifully produced, and incorporates excellent short illustrative case reports. At the end there is a table relating to the indications, dosage, toxicity, etc. of 15 drugs in common use. The authors seem curiously uninterested in prognosis, about which nothing is said, or in the social implications of epilepsy in relation, for instance, to parents and family or to schooling. The chapter on electro-encephalography describes clearly the common abnormal patterns but omits a description of the normal tracings. On the whole it is a useful little book to have at hand, but is perhaps rather expensive at 42s.


This monograph is based on the clinical experience of 214 cases of muscular dystrophy seen since 1948. The authors divide the condition into three clinically and prognostically distinct groups: (1) ascending infantile progressive muscular dystrophy; (2) the more benign scapulo-humeral and facio-scapulo-humeral forms; and (3) atypical forms including the 'para musculodystrophics', myotonia dystrophy, etc.

Much stress is laid throughout on the necessity for close collaboration between the paediatrician, the neurologist, the orthopaedic surgeon and the dietician, and they emphasize that a positive approach is essential in this condition.

Drug therapy with prostigmine, vitamin E, choline, glutamic acid, etc., and special diets are regarded as merely supportive though of some importance, but early diagnosis and early physiotherapeutic and orthopaedic treatment are essential.

The illustrations are clear. Some details of the biochemical disturbances and the genetic basis of some of the cases are given. A useful reference list is appended.

This is a useful monograph setting out the experiences of one team of workers but one which does not really add anything very new to our understanding of this group of conditions.