BOOK REVIEWS


The second edition of her book is, as Dr. Taussig says, 'like a deciduous tree; the fundamental outline remains but the tree has all new leaves and a few new branches'. It has, in fact, grown a completely new trunk, and now appears in two volumes. Volume I, upward of 200 pages, is designed to help the student and non-specialist. It describes cardiac embryological development and maldevelopment, clinical methods of diagnosis and special techniques, and it also contains two long chapters, one on the nature of cyanosis and the other on medical care and treatment. Volume II, over 1,000 pages, is concerned with special malformations, and is designed for use by the paediatrician and cardiologist. Much of the book has been extensively revised or rewritten and added to, and there are several new chapters.

Dr. Taussig draws on her immense experience and presents her readers with a mine of information about the conditions which she describes, but she has gone to immense pains to present the material so that her reader shall not be swamped and bemused. Her style is lucid, her approach is clinical and didactic, and one is seldom in doubt of her very precise meaning. The text is profusely illustrated with diagrams, radiographs, photographs of pathological specimens, electrocardiogram tracings and line drawings, and each individual condition is illustrated with a full-page diagram of the cardiovascular system and the course of the blood flow in the abnormality, and often of the normal circulation for comparison.

The two special chapters in Volume I, on Cyanosis and Treatment respectively, are of the utmost value to anyone having care of these children. Volume II contains a special article on pulmonary hypertension. Dr. Taussig differentiates clearly between primary hypertension due, she surmises, to abnormality of the pulmonary small or medium arteries, and secondary hypertension following on increased pulmonary circulatory pressure resulting from the abnormality. Secondary hypertension receives no more notice than to be defined and, indeed, very little more is heard of this very serious complication in so far as it affects the prognosis of operation on, for instance, ventricular septal defect, though under primary hypertension she describes the special hypertension that accompanies patent ductus arteriosus. It is a little difficult to follow very precisely what is in Dr. Taussig’s mind regarding the aetiology of hypertension in the various types of cardiac abnormality, and one gathers in this chapter that she is referring mostly to the condition where abnormalities of blood flow are not present.

A single curious omission is any indication of the relative frequency of the very many abnormalities she describes. Surgical treatment is only discussed from the medical point of view, and it is not always easy to discover the kind of risks that may have to be faced in advising surgery for any particular condition.

Dr. Taussig’s book is undoubtedly one of the finest and most useful on congenital heart disease in the English language, and the price of the English volume is very low. The paper, printing and reproductions are of a very high quality for this country, and the binding undistinguished but adequate.


This symposium represents the proceedings of a gathering of what the editor calls 'a stellar group of world famous authorities', meeting at Deborah Hospital, Philadelphia, in April 1960. Nearly 40 contributions are grouped under six main headings, as follows: pathogenic factors, diagnosis, the fate of unrelied congenital heart disease, special surgical conditions, the special surgical tools, and the surgery of various lesions. The seventh section is a 20-page debate on the diagnostic and surgical management of the cyanotic newborn infant.

These contributions collectively manage to cover an immense field and individually maintain an intensity of interest that stems from the very personal part that each contributor has played in probing out the unknown channels along which routine cardiac surgery will shortly flow. Their papers are the personal experiences of the difficulties, the speculative ideas, the achievements and even the disappointments of each contributor, and the whole book has a zest which is almost impossible to impart to a textbook or even to a series of authoritative articles of the 'recent advances' type.

The debate in Section 7 is of the typical round-table variety, giving the differences of opinion and the back-chat between individuals in the assembly, during which
argument is often, if not acrimonious, at least heated. It gives an impression of the fluidity of opinion on many fundamental ideas under discussion and of the urgency with which cardiac cyanosis in the newborn is regarded. When Dr. William Muscott says that the earliest he has operated for pulmonary stenosis is on an infant 3 days old, and Sir Russell Brock agrees that the earlier in the first month that operation is undertaken the better, and when Dr. Varco asks Dr. Senning 'so far as I know they have never yet catheterized any child intrarterine in Sweden, but they have done it through the delivery canal sometimes—would you tell us the indications of the Scandinavian group for catheterization in the immediate newborn period?', one is indeed being kept up with the times. But that was two years ago and already some of the questions then debated have since been answered.

This beautifully printed and well-illustrated stiff paperbacked volume is, and will for a few years yet remain, an invaluable companion to a full-scale textbook on congenital heart disease.


This volume represents the proceedings of a seminar organized by the International Children's Centre in Zurich in 1960, under the chairmanship of Professor G. Fanconi. The main subjects of discussion were methods of studying growth and development, physical growth, psychological development, influence of social environment on growth, nutrition and growth, assessment of health in studies of child development, and accurate prediction of growth and adult height. Of the 10 lecturers (Drs. Bayley, Dean, Falkner, Graffar, Hindley, Karlberg, Prader, Sontag, Stuart and Tanner), most if not all have already written more extensively elsewhere on their subject. Short papers or contributions to the discussion were provided by some of the 103 other participants in the seminar. As might be expected, the volume contains much that is unexceptionable but very little that is new. The now common practice for international or other agencies to organize conferences of those working in a particular field is certainly fruitful for the participants, particularly through informal contact. Whether the publication in extenso of the proceedings is equally valuable is much more doubtful. It tends, as in the present instance, to be a rehash of work previously published, which even the most unconscientious editor cannot transmute into a critical review. At their worst, when discussions are transcribed verbatim, such published proceedings contain much that even the speakers could hardly wish to see immortalized in print. The present volume is a fair specimen of its kind and has the merit of possessing an attractive format, 85 illustrations, and a number of key references.


This comprehensive work has been extensively revised, with the addition of some 500 references relating mostly to work published since 1955. It now reviews a considerably wider field than the first edition, and the chapters dealing with sex differences, measurement of developmental age, and with the effects on growth of heredity, malnutrition, illness, psychological disturbances, and the trend towards earlier maturity have been rewritten. Some practical guidance on the measurement of children, based on experience of the Harpenden growth study, is included. The author considers not only adolescence but also more generally the whole growth period from the viewpoint of a human biologist. It is clear that there are still important lacunae in existing knowledge, some of which, e.g. the exact relation of intelligence—scoring to physical maturation, are of mutual interest to the biologist and educationist. The book is of great value in providing a critical review of the very widely scattered literature and also in pointing out where the present data are inconclusive. It deserves continued success and will certainly prove stimulating and provocative to a variety of readers concerned with man in the making.


This publication brings together two similar studies, one carried out on German schoolchildren (Drs. Paschlaü) and one on Japanese schoolchildren (Prof. Hagen). In both instances the studies are concerned with habitus and acceleration of maturation as indicated by cross-sectional data. The periods reviewed are 1913 to 1958 in the case of the German children, and 1900 to 1958 in the case of the Japanese children. Both studies confirm the familiar tendency to increased size and accelerated development during the present century which has been reported from many countries, and both illustrate the temporary interruption in the upward trend caused by the privations of World War II. The effects of the war of 1914-18 are clearly evident in the case of the German children. Although the methods of assessment and presentation of data are not identical in the two studies, their publication together provides some opportunity for comparison of two widely different racial groups. It will be interesting to see whether improved economic conditions and concern with child health in Japan during the next decade will tend to reduce the differences in size between German and Japanese children of the same age, which were still evident when the studies were completed.