concerned with the care of infants and young children and it will be particularly of value to the paediatrician. Nearly every statement in the book is qualified by a reference to the literature, and as a source book for the lecturer and research worker it can have few rivals.


The new edition of this established monograph retains much of the material that has previously appeared, but includes a new section on the psychoanalytical approach to child development, a brief discussion of placental physiology, and some consideration of the prognosis of prematurity. Over a hundred new references have been added. While the authors have succeeded in compressing a large amount of information and references principally to review articles into less than 400 pages, the expansion of the subject matter has resulted in some of it being dealt with very superficially, e.g. the sections on nutrition, behaviour and personality and abnormal growth. There are a number of loose generalizations that are misleading or suggest that the authors are not familiar with the continental literature. Indeed, the notable paucity of references to work published in any language but English gives the book a rather parochial flavour that is regrettable in view of its many real merits.


‘Lycurgus, the law-giver of the Spartans, took two puppies of the same litter and reared them in quite different ways, so that from the one he produced a mischievous and greedy cur, and from the other a dog able to follow a scent and to hunt.’ The six chapters of this entertaining little book instance some of the many experiments on animals that have been done to gain understanding of control circumstances than is possible in the human, information regarding the influence the experiences in very early, even antenatal, life can have on adult behaviour. Lycurgus went on to demonstrate to the assembled Spartans that of his two genetically identical dogs, because of different upbringing, ‘one has turned out a gluton and the other a hunter’.

Each of the six authors responsible for a chapter, unlike Lycurgus, take great care to warn the reader against the validity of experiments on animals when applied to human behaviour. Nevertheless, they draw a host of interesting conclusions regarding the influence of early environmental circumstances on later development in the avian and animal kingdom.

Dr. W. R. Thompson tells us that Vincent found that pregnant rats given small amounts of alcohol produced offspring that were emotionally, more highly motivated and better learners than the controls, but that larger doses had the opposite effect; S. Levine tells of three groups of infant rats, one given frequent brief electric shocks daily, another only handled and removed from their nests, and a third group left in the nests and not handled at all, the first two were, when adult, indistinguishable, whereas the unhanded animals were more emotional, judged by the frequency of defaecation and urination, and suffered general impairment of performance. After further experiments he concludes that ‘it is possible that some stressful experience in infancy is necessary if adaptability to environmental stress is to develop’.

The particularly interesting chapter on the primates points out that, of all animals, these by a long way come closest to the human in the capacity to learn rather than react reflexly. The conclusions are simply stated. First, that learning ability increases with age, secondly that for every component there is an initial stage when learning is very slow and a later stage when the animal can solve problems with maximum facility. Moreover, that it is wasteful to begin training too soon (on the contrary it may develop training resistance), and nothing is lost by waiting beyond the age of maximum learning capacity. ‘It is not necessary to strike while the iron is hot or, phrased in another way, once the iron is hot it stays so’.

Dr. Bowlby sums up sensibly in the last chapter wherein he states dogmatically that direct extrapolation of findings from one species to another is not permissible. He also warns against many errors of interpretation which if not guarded against will lead to ill-planned research with fruitless findings. And he finally says that of the many lessons to be learnt from animal studies one is ‘the caution we must exercise before dubbing experiences favourable or unfavourable’, and that it is as well, if we are to advise wisely, that we should be alive to this predicament.

The book is well printed on nice paper and contains a few useful illustrations.


It is with pleasure that we acknowledge the arrival of the 5th edition of this small valuable compendium. It is characteristic of the author and his contributors that diagnosis and therapy of childhood diseases are given brief and appropriate comments so that this little book can be easily consulted not only by the experienced paediatrician but also by the busy overworked general practitioner. Small print and unnecessary details are omitted. The book has been brought up to date: its surgical sections are particularly valuable.

There are good illustrations and x-ray pictures, and the book of 232 pages is strongly recommended.