
That there have been four editions of Professor Ellis's book in 12 years confirms its well-established popularity and its position as one of the standard textbooks on paediatrics. Since the last edition was published in 1960, the changes made in the present edition are not extensive. The thalidomide story is included in the 'man made' congenital deformities, though thalidomide is not to be found in the index. The chapter on the inborn errors of metabolism has been expanded to include an account of the more recently recognized conditions.

It is a pleasure to re-read this book with its economy of words and clarity of expression. There are comprehensive references given to assist further reading. The management and treatment of conditions has been kept well up to date, though in reviewing a book it is always possible to suggest additions and alterations. The value of 'colistin in Pyocyanaea and Esch. coli infections in infancy is now sufficiently established to merit inclusion, as is the use of ethusuximide in difficult cases of petit mal. There seems good reason now to omit completely intrastragial oxygen treatment in the resuscitation of the newborn in favour of postnasal oxygen, when laryngeal intubation or more drastic measures are not indicated. Many would like to see advised an indwelling gastric catheter for aspiration in the management of the early stages of diabetic coma.

With so much attention focused on accidental poisoning in infants and young children, the possibility of including a more detailed treatment of the common poisons such as aspirin, barbiturates, ferrous sulphate seems well worthy of consideration. There is an excellent reference given for poisons but, in an emergency, this may not be immediately available.

It is a well-produced book with an uncrowded layout, easy to read and with a particularly high standard of reproduction of photographs, diagrams and x-ray pictures. This new edition of Disease in Infancy and Childhood will certainly hold its position as one of the best single volume books on paediatrics.


The new technique of intestinal biopsy has spread to many countries in the past few years, and is probably now making its maximum contribution to the study of malabsorptive states. With characteristic promptitude the CIBA Foundation assembled the pioneers of the technique in Madrid, and the present small volume, well illustrated and commendably cheap, brings together most of the current thought in this field.

Discussions on the low-power appearance of the whole biopsy specimen are introduced by Booth from London, MacDonald from Seattle, and Baker from Vellore. While there was agreement that villous atrophy was usual in the upper jejunum in idiopathic steatorrhoea, the meaning of a change from the normal finger-like villi to leaf-like villi was the subject of considerable debate. This was made more pointed by the report from Vellore that not only sprue patients but also normal subjects showed leaf-like villi, though foetuses did not. Thus, while leaf-like villi might be acquired, possibly as the result of some unknown insult, they seemed not to affect the intestinal function, and sprue had to be regarded as due to a lesion at a subcellular or biochemical level. On the other hand the extensive sampling of the intestinal mucosa that has been practised at Seattle has revealed the very close interdependence, in coeliac disease, of villous change and gluten-induced damage. On a gluten-free diet the more distal part of the small bowel heals first and eventually completely, while the proximal part has not yet been shown to achieve complete normality.

The electron microscopic appearances of the mucosal cells and their microvilli in health and in steatorrhoea are described by Shiner, and the effects of gluten and its fractionation products by Frazer. Those practising or making use of intestinal biopsy will value the lively discussions for which these Study Group reports are famous.


The Symposia organized by the Ciba Foundation are now too well known to need introduction. However stimulating to the participants such symposia may be, not everyone is convinced that a verbatim report of discussions to papers, which themselves might perhaps best be published in the usual journals, justifies the cost of printing and publishing. This volume, a record of a meeting held in 1961 on the pancreas, is in every way equal to the high standard of its predecessors. There are sections on the ultrastructure and histochemistry of the pancreas, the nature and physiological control of pancreatic secretions, the assessment of pancreatic function, and on the genetic and metabolic aspects of the abnormal pancreas, with several contributions under each heading.

Although the symposium included aspects of both normal and abnormal pancreatic function, in fact the major part deals with normal physiology and only a relatively small part with the abnormal pancreas. While the former is fundamental, it is perhaps of greater interest to the physiologist than to the clinician who will find the latter more immediately relevant. The paediatrician will be especially interested in the description of the hereditary form of pancreatitis, in which the average age of onset is 12 years, and in the article on the diagnostic value of the sweat test in cystic fibrosis, although this is mainly a review of published work. There is also a useful discussion of the standardization of pancreatic function tests, enzyme methods, and sweat tests.

Although this volume can be recommended to those

This volume comprises a series of interesting papers given at an international symposium on protein metabolism held in Leyden in June 1962.

Emphasis has been placed first on the action of hormones at the cellular level, and secondly on many aspects concerned with the mode of action and effects of anabolic steroids. Protein synthesis is effected by many hormones and in experiments described attempts have been made to elucidate the different ways in which growth hormone, testosterone, and oestradiol act on the cell.

Many of the papers are review articles, and those concerned with the clinical use of anabolic steroids will be particularly welcomed by the paediatrician dealing with growth disorders in childhood. It is disappointing, but perhaps not unexpected, that Professor A. Prader has concluded in an excellent review of his work that the growth-promoting effect of anabolic steroids is dependent not only on dosage and duration of treatment, but upon various endogenous factors. He thought it unlikely that these substances led to any increase above the expected adult height. Many clinicians, too, will be interested in the Danish experience in anabolic steroids in the treatment of renal failure and the opinion given on the effect of these substances on liver function.

This book is well produced; the text is in English, but summaries in German and French are given at the end of each paper. In addition, there are useful lists of references.

This authoritative book can be highly recommended, and much of it will be of great interest to the clinician.

Poisoning. Chemistry ... Symptoms ... Treatments.


A book on poisoning by a Professor of Paediatrics naturally concentrates on poisoning in children: indeed, a graphic frontispiece illustrates this 'the most frequent paediatric emergency that exists today,' and the author stresses his own deep personal concern with it.

One difficulty is that a relatively small subject, however important, when expanded to a book weighing 2 lb. 12 oz. must involve a certain leisureliness, if not padding. There is great virtue in completeness, but the inclusion of linseed oil ('digestible and nutritious, ingestion in large amounts is laxative') hardly merits inclusion, and neat's-foot oil, although used in America apparently to soften and waterproof leather, certainly was, and very likely still is, one of the commonest cooking fats in the Midlands of this country.

On the other hand, although black and blue nightmares, the relatively harmless solanum, are included (and illustrated), there is only the briefest mention of atropa belladonna. There is naturally a good deal on local hazards, from the inevitable black widow spider to various strange plants. The highly American-poison attitude of the book is not an adverse criticism: the book is meant for America; but it detracts from its appeal in England. Very little is said about ferrous sulphate (and it is not mentioned as such in the index), but although 'colouring and candy-coating' are mentioned, presumably American children are not subjected to the frightful risk of poison disguised as delicious sweets to which English children are so lethally liable.

Phenobarbitone, also, which is an all too common poison in this country, is apparently no trouble at all in America: its use in the treatment of other poisoning is given in detail but the comment on it as a poison is the shortest in the book, a line and a half.

Another objection is that the book is very weak indeed on the problem of identification of the exact poison while the patient is still alive, and it would be particularly irritating to a physician struggling to save a child poisoned by an unknown agent to read that at least half the brain should be sent for analysis. But this objection is not altogether fair: all books are poor on this subject. But there is a way out of this impasse: to concentrate on treating the processes by which a poison is killing the patient, rather than to bother over the exact substance-identification and the exhibition of specific 'antidotes,' and this aspect of treatment is not sufficiently stressed. The book is much better at enabling the nonplussed physician to tell a mother what to do when she complains that her son has just eaten a tri-ogen rose bomb, or when she thinks her husband, who is a straw-hat maker, is being poisoned by something in the factory.

It is hardly a condemnation of this book to say that it is not the ideal one for this country: in so far as the natural history or social habits of countries differ, books on toxicology must of necessity be best for the country for which they are written.


The editor states in the preface: 'The aim of this book is to present current concepts of the common methods of artificial respiration along with the practical and physiological considerations on which their use is based.' After World War II the possibility of chemical warfare stimulated a considerable amount of research in the United States of America into resuscitation. After much testing of various methods of artificial respiration, one of the oldest methods was found most effective under nearly all circumstances—the mouth-to-mouth method.

The evidence for the superiority of this method and the demonstration of its feasibility are given as the main reasons for the timing of this book.