BOOK REVIEWS

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wishing to acquaint themselves with some recent work on the pancreas, it has perhaps less special interest for paediatricians than other symposia in the same series.


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.


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 unreliability, 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 night-shades, the relatively harmless solana, 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-poise 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.