Book Reviews


At first sight a book of over 200 pages on the physical examination of children, with only 18 illustrations, seems rather heavy reading. However, this work has reached its third edition in less than ten years, which, while indicating a good deal of hard work on the part of the author and a considerable number of readers, also pays tribute to the skill of Dr. L. A. Barnes in presenting a mass of descriptive detail in a surprisingly readable style.

There are chapters on each region of the body, on the examination of the newborn, and on physical measurements. All the familiar and many unfamiliar physical signs are described in detail, with examples of the diseases which may give rise to them. Since the readers of this book will mostly be those with the least experience in clinical paediatrics, it is questionable whether so many unfamiliar and unusual signs should be described at such length and in such detail. A section on developmental diagnosis ought to have been included, perhaps at the cost of omitting such items as the dark ring around the rectal mucosa in the early diagnosis of lead poisoning, or the to-and-fro motions of the head, synchronous with the pulse, in aortic insufficiency, a sign which enthusiasts for eponymous titles (but not lovers of the French romantic poets) will know as de Musset's.

The one serious criticism of this book is its lack of adequate illustrations. There are 4 line drawings and 14 photographs, some of which, for example those illustrating percussion of the chest, palpation of the femoral pulse, and palpation of the skull, add little or nothing to the descriptions in the text. Surely the subject of physical diagnosis lends itself ideally to profuse photographic illustration. It could only have been a tyrannical publisher that prevented Dr. Barnes from including photographs of the Pierre-Robin, Treacher-Collins, de Lange, Waardenburg, and Turner syndromes in the section on 'Rare Syndromes with Characteristic Appearance'.

However, one cannot expect too much for 32 shillings these days, and it is reassuring to know that the students and house officers who read this book will appreciate to the full the importance of physical signs in the art of clinical medicine.


This book takes a hard look at present methods of child care, draws valid conclusions, and suggests vital reforms. These impinge on all branches of medicine and make it essential reading not only for the whole medical profession, but for its ancillary services and administrators as well.

The authors' principal thesis is the promotion of preventive medicine. They stress the importance of a comprehensive approach to health, which should be instilled in medical students, general practitioners, paediatricians, and the public. They quite rightly regret the concentration on the less common organic diseases by teachers in medical schools.

At the end of some chapters with titles such as Preventive Attitudes, Education, The General Practitioner, The Paediatrician, Children's Ward Or Children's Hospital?, they suggest thought-provoking and valuable reforms. I would have preferred to have seen a final chapter in which all their proposals were assembled and, possibly, in order of priority.

For paediatricians there is a message in the foreword by Dr. Philip Evans when he states, 'Paediatrics, but not every paediatrician, has moved out of the hospital'.

The authors are to be congratulated on their stimulating and progressive ideas which are put so succinctly. They conclude with the 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child' which could well have been headed by:

- 'Nourish the sapling
- And strong will grow the tree
- What the child is, the man shall be'.


This book covers a good deal of the same ground as the recently published book by E. Salinig, 'Das Kind im Bereich der Geburtshilfe', which was the subject of a review in the October 1966 issue of this journal. Like it, it marks the opening up of the new subject of foetal medicine. Kubli, who works in Frankfurt, was one of the first obstetricians to incorporate Saling's techniques into his practice, and the first three-quarters of the book, which is devoted to foetal asphyxia, is largely based upon the author's observations, using these techniques. Anyone interested in this modern approach to monitoring the foetus before and during labour should certainly have this small book, which contains much information not available elsewhere, as, for instance, the useful section on the relation between foetal and maternal acidosis during labour.

The last quarter of the book deals with haemolytic disease of the newborn. The predictive value of liquor amnii examination is fully accepted and the relative merits of the different methods for interpreting measurements of bilirubin levels in liquor are discussed in detail.
By confining himself to those aspects of the subject which he has personally studied, Kubli has produced an extremely useful book.


The standard of successive issues of the British Medical Bulletin is so high that one always opens a new number with a sense of excitement. This issue is on a subject in which British and Commonwealth scientists have made very significant advances in recent years. It is not surprising to find that many of the articles are contributed by colleagues, or ex-colleagues, of G. W. Harris who provides the Introduction. The subjects discussed, however, are not limited to hypothalamic-anterior pituitary relationships for there are authoritative articles on neuro-secretion and hormone content by Sloper and Heller. Non-endocrine aspects of hypothalamus are also considered, though not exhaustively. There are particularly interesting articles on temperature regulation and the hypothalamic regulation of the cardiovascular system.

One wonders whether this volume could have been made even more informative to the non-specialist if there had been a general review of the hypothalamic-anterior pituitary relationship. Doctors of middle age and onwards first became acquainted with the anterior pituitary when it was 'the leader of the endocrine orchestra'—when it was quite independent of the central nervous system in the sense that there were no nervous connexions, but nevertheless related to information coming to the sensorium and this was obviously teleologically convenient. Using P. M. Daniel's excellent article on the blood supply as an introduction, a more modern picture of brain pituitary relationships can be built up for those who are not familiar with the present views.

It is sad to see that in the article on hypothalamic releasing factors, Harris, Reed, and Fawcett have repeated a misprint from Sir Humphrey Rolleston when it is said that Sir Richard Lower (1670) stated that ' . . . serum . . . tissues . . . through the infundibulum'. The authors obviously appreciated that the meaning was issues and it is a pity that an error of printing in 1936 should be perpetuated in 1966. Lower's work is reproduced in facsimile (Lower, R., De Catarhis, 1672, trans. R. Hunter & I. Macalpine. London: Dawsons, 1963) which, fortunately for this reviewer, has an excellent translation.

Two general matters in this number are particularly admirable. Those who planned it have not shirked their duty to review work that is developing rapidly and may be superseded. In addition, individual authors seem to have stated controversial matters very fairly, even though their own position is unequivocal. This issue of the Bulletin is, like many others, required reading for endocrinologists, neurologists, and physiologists.


This volume records the proceedings of the Symposium held in October 1965, which was attended by persons of various disciplines, including paediatricians and biochemists. In the diagnosis and treatment of patients with inborn errors, close collaboration between clinician and laboratory is essential, and for this the clinician requires a sound understanding of the underlying chemical defect.

After a review of the historical development of the concept of inborn errors, current ideas about the mechanism of protein biosynthesis are discussed in a form which the clinician will find readable. This provides a basis for the understanding of the subject.

There follow papers on congenital adrenal hyperplasia, and they provide particularly readable accounts of cortisol and aldosterone biosynthesis. It is shown how all these facts help to elucidate the clinical features of the various types of adrenogenital syndrome.

Finally, there is an article on the treatment of immunological deficiency by transplantation. This perhaps points the way towards the treatment of some inborn errors in the future.

This book is highly recommended for the clinician desirous of obtaining more insight into the chemistry of inborn errors, especially those relating to the adrenal cortex. It is nicely produced and contains useful lists of references.


The many who have had frequent cause to be grateful for the existence of Geigy's Scientific Tables have now been provided by Drs. Plenert and Heine of East Germany with a book the size of a largish pocket book which aims to provide something of the same compendium of data related to paediatrics.

Once or twice in a lifetime one may be at a loss to know where to go to discover the normal copper content of meconium in a premature; the difference between the γ-globulin concentration in lumbar and ventricular CSF; or the amount of hyaluronidase in cord blood. Here, such recondite facts can be found, along with reference to those of a more mundane kind, including some which might surely have been dispensed with (e.g. that the 'normal' Wassermann reaction is 'negative').

References are given, though it would have been useful to quote also some alternative sources of data. But an almost incredible omission is the absence of an index, without which a reference book of this kind must lose half its usefulness. With so serious a handicap, few paediatricians unfamiliar with German will bother to