with their higher examinations and are beginning to wonder what paediatrics is all about. If they dip into this book they will be exposed to the wide range of subjects covered by child development, and they will become familiar with the various techniques of investigation. They will then begin to realize that the study of the development of little people is indeed a giant of a subject.


Dr. O’Gorman writes from his experiences at Smith Hospital, Henley-on-Thames, which functions as a residential centre for autistic children. Childhood autism, he says, is no longer thought to be a rare condition, and this useful little book is an attempt to inquire into its ‘true nature’, though from the outset it is clear how nebulous the concept of this fascinating state of childhood mind still remains. There is indeed scarcely an adequate definition, but by and large, Dr. O’Gorman accepts the ‘Nine points’ delineating the ‘Schizophrenic Syndrome in Childhood’ put forward by Dr. Mildred Creak’s Working Party in 1961. Chapter 3 ‘Defensive Mechanisms against Intolerable Reality’ outlines Dr. O’Gorman’s own convictions on the nature of the autistic reaction and is the most valuable in the book. Any child he says ‘sometimes, frequently, and some almost constantly, find reality intolerable and can deal with the situation in a number of ways’. The normal method is to flee or to fight or to strive in some way to cope appropriately. Less normal solutions are, firstly by what he calls ‘monotomisation’, an attempt to make reality less unpredictable by imposing rituals and trying to prevent variations in any aspect of the environment; secondly, by distortion, that is by fantasy, delusion, and hallucination; and finally, if all else fails, by withdrawal. These three solutions are the schizophrenic reaction. A fourth solution, open to adults, is suicide, but this does not occur to the autistic child. Each of these methods of dealing with the intolerable are discussed, and he sums up his hypothesis by saying that schizophrenic reactions, ‘develop in people for whom reality as they perceived it is, if not intolerable, at least so unattractive as to inhibit active participation in it’. Their personalities are so vulnerable that they cannot cope with the environment as they experience it. This vulnerability may declare itself at any time of life. It may be entirely constitutional (and could be so severe that even slightly adverse environmental defects would provoke a schizophrenic reaction) or it may be produced or enhanced by disease or trauma. The disease could be inherited or acquired. The trauma could be physical or emotional.’ This general statement, Dr. O’Gorman makes clear, applies to the schizophrenic syndrome whether in adults, adolescents, children, or infants, and can give rise to an infinitely varied clinical picture resulting from the age of the subject and the varying combination and proportion of the three defence mechanisms.

The aetiology of so varied a clinical picture is likely to be multi-factorial, and some of the factors that have been incriminated are discussed in Chapter 4. They include organic disease of the central nervous system or delay in its maturation, biochemical disturbance, emotional trauma, and disturbances of psychodynamic mechanisms, particularly of the mother/child relationship and, of course, a large constitutional factor which Dr. O’Gorman says is always present and of paramount importance.

The treatment, education, and training of the autistic child, at first usually institutional and later in the home with continuing close contact with a trained team, is necessarily a prolonged, continuous, and ‘unrelenting’ process, and he makes it clear that even in a special institution, such as Smith Hospital, rehabilitation into normal school and family life is possible in only a few.

Many aspects of education and training are carefully and interestingly discussed: mother substitutes, and the importance of refashioning the child’s suspended or disrupted relationship with its mother; pre-school training; and schooling, which should be through a cautious and gradual introduction into normal, or more often E.S.N. schools, rather than in schools exclusively for autistic children, which he emphatically rejects. The enormous difficulties and the time and devotion that is needed to rehabilitate these children or even prevent their deterioration is reiterated. Dr. O’Gorman is optimistic that with increasing understanding of the aetiology of autism, and a longer experience of appropriate measures, steady improvement in results can be expected.

Dr. O’Gorman has written a book which is simple and easy to understand, at the same time undogmatic and yet authoritative, and it will surely prove invaluable and illuminating to all who work with infants and children.


It is appropriate that the centenary of the clinical description of mongolism by Langdon Down should be celebrated, and fortunate that the Ciba Foundation should edit it with the standards it has set in such study groups.

The late Lord Brain, who married a granddaughter of Langdon Down, introduces the conference with a short, lucid, and scholarly introduction, which includes the information that Langdon Down was Maynard Keynes’ grandfather.

This introduction is followed by a series of short papers, many presenting new data. Penrose attempts to resolve the difficulties in trisomy 21 and 22 being indistinguishable cytologically, by elaborating an earlier suggestion that there are two syndromes of mongolism, and he suggests a breakdown, mainly on two possible populations of dermatoglyphic patterns.

There are, inevitably, some omissions, including a discussion on mosaicism, translocation, foetal survival and proneness to leukaemia. A surprising and unjustifiable omission is Langdon Down’s original paper.
This is difficult to obtain, and centenary reprinting was declined by the editors of several journals, including this one. It has been reprinted in 'Heredity'.


Professor Hutchison has extensively revised and rewritten this 2nd edition. As in the 1st edition, a fairly large proportion of the book is devoted to neonatal problems, with a notably good section on prematurity, but there are sections on all common paediatric conditions. Among others, the chapters on inborn errors of metabolism, and on diseases of the nervous system have been extensively modified. There is a new chapter on accidental poisoning in children, and a good, though brief, chapter on behaviour disorders. Recent advances, including laboratory methods and therapy, figure largely in the revisions that have been made.

The book is easy to read and the material is set out in a logical manner. It is probably sufficiently comprehensive to be of use for undergraduates reading for qualifying examinations, though one would have liked, for this purpose, an account of the normal newborn.

It will also be of value as a guide for general practitioners and for postgraduates who are preparing for the D.C.H. examination, and there is a small list of carefully selected references at the end of each chapter, which greatly increases its value as a postgraduate textbook.

It is a small volume, but the author has avoided being dogmatic, and has combined a refreshing practical approach with a wide personal knowledge of paediatrics.

The price is moderate, the author's style makes for easy reading, and the book can be fully recommended as a short general textbook on diseases of children.


The experts in computer technology tell us that medical diagnosis will be made rapidly and accurately by means of their machines within a decade, and presumably these machines will be 'programmed' by texts which are expansions of this sort of book. Such texts make dull reading though they may make very useful tools. Professor Illingworth has certainly written much more readable books than this one. The author has clearly had the needs of general practitioners paramount in his mind and the book is much less useful for undergraduates or paediatricians.

About 100 symptoms are dealt with one after another, first by giving a list of the diseases in which the symptom occurs and thereafter by giving a few lines about each disease. Only diagnosis is considered, but some references are given for further reading. This naturally involves an enormous amount of repetition and a great deal of selection by the author, so that some symptoms are dealt with much more fully than others. There are 6 pages on 'stridor' but 6 lines on 'dysuria'.

Where the author has allowed himself room to tell a story, he is at his best and there are good commentaries on the differential diagnosis of pain, jaundice, convulsions, and head size. Throughout there is the unmistakable imprint of the author's personality, wide experience and knowledge of paediatrics, and this, together with his established reputation for lucid, original writing, will ensure a large circulation among general practitioners.

The book ends with 6 pages on the side-effects of drugs and with an interesting list of 14 specially recommended books.


'The natural history of headaches in children' by Professor Bo Bille is by far the best chapter in this book, both for readability and content. But, though this publication is to be commended for focusing attention on a common childhood problem, in the event the subject does not justify a whole book. It contains little that is new, and among redundancies and repetitions (and some flat contradictions) even sensible and shrewd advice tends to be hidden.


This book is intended for ophthalmologists interested in those eye diseases usually found in childhood. For the paediatrician who wishes to diagnose the eye changes found in his patients, there are better books, as this volume contains too many details of surgical technique and the choice of operation.

This volume should be of particular value to residents coming into contact with childhood diseases for the first time, but it will also be of considerable value to those consultants who see the unusual case infrequently and wish to draw on a large accumulated experience. It is inevitable in a book of this size that there will probably be too much for one group and too little for the other, but the balance has been well maintained.

Developmental anomalies of the eye are common and it is proper that the first chapter should be devoted to the embryology of the eye. The chapters on examination of the eye and refraction have been sensibly confined to the use of techniques particularly appropriate to the examination of children. Strabismus and orthoptics are dealt with in a simple and lucid manner. The diseases of the outer and inner eye are dealt with fully and well, and particular emphasis is given to the thorny problems of cataract and glaucoma, together with the syndromes associated with them.