interest between the obstetrician and neonatal paediatrician that is daily becoming more apparent, and to some of us more anomalous. This unhelpful demarcation is particularly obvious in the chapter devoted to fetal hypoxia: it is sound but incomplete, because little attention is devoted to the diagnosis of this condition, one that affects the whole future of the developing child. The emphasis of the book is on the fetus, but as a consequence the interaction between mother and baby is out of focus. Nevertheless the author has succeeded in accomplishing the formidable task that he set himself to the advantage of all. It is to be hoped that the stimulus he has given will in future result in a more logical pooling of knowledge and co-ordination of effort.


This is the 5th edition of a well-known elementary textbook first issued in 1951. Though its bulk has increased (not unduly) over the years, its outlook remains the same. There are chapters on hereditary and environmental factors, on fetal growth, childhood growth, prematures, behaviour development, endocrines, nutrition, teeth, and abnormal growth. The writing is clear, the information, with few exceptions, correct, yet one has the uncomfortable feeling that a student set to read the book would emerge with no real view or knowledge of the biology of children’s growth, of the balance of forces operative or of the interaction of social factors in the environment, with the genetic programming of the continuously developing organism. Though the book remains an excellent place to look up practical things like number of erupted teeth at a given age, it cannot compare in insight with many of the contributions in the recently issued book on Human Development, edited by Falkner. The revision for this edition has been patchy. On p. 49 for instance one reads ‘recent studies have shown...’ followed by three references, to papers in 1950, 1956, and a long obsolete edition (1955) of Tanner’s Growth at Adolescence (which crops up at several points in the text: evidently the authors are not keeping up with their rivals!). The chapter on abnormal growth has been considerably increased in size, but in Table 57 the old mistake is made of confusing retardation in growth with smallness in size. Thus achondroplasias are said to be retarded (which is not usually the case) when what is meant is small. The clarity of the book makes it easy to criticize; nevertheless, it is one of the three or four texts on growth that should be known to all postgraduate students of paediatrics, and some will find it the book of their choice.


While modern histological and histochemical studies are filling the gaps in our knowledge of many conditions, other researches, particularly in cytogenetics and biochemistry, are revealing underlying causes of many newly-recognized syndromes associated with mental retardation, especially inborn errors of metabolism. It is, therefore, timely that a book concerned with the basic pathology of mental retardation should be published. Since it is impossible to encompass all facets of this subject in a volume of this size, discussion of mental retardation in adults and in association with conditions not normally dealt with in the context of mental deficiency are to a large extent omitted. On the other hand, greater attention is paid to undifferentiated mental retardation and to some rare diseases. Causative factors are discussed under the headings of genetics, ontogenesis, birth trauma, and postnatal causes. There are excellent summaries of most congenital and acquired conditions associated with brain defects, and these are illustrated by clear didactic photographs and diagrams. A large section on metabolic disorders includes a useful table summarizing the findings in 47 conditions: 21 appendices include details of screening tests, specific biochemical estimations, notes on neuropathological methods, and lists of normal values of various brain constituents. The bibliography is well chosen, comprehensive, and up to date. While this book will appeal particularly to the paediatric pathologist, it can be usefully studied by clinicians, general pathologists, and all those concerned with the mentally-handicapped child.

The Society for the Study of Inborn Errors of Metabolism

Preliminary Notice: 1968 Symposium

This year’s symposium will be held jointly with European colleagues in Zurich on June 24 and 25.

The programme will include the following:—

Session I The Lysozymes.
Sessions II and IV Short papers on inborn errors of metabolism.
Session III Enzymopenic anaemias.

Sessions I and III will be given by invited speakers. Short (10-15 min.) papers are invited for sessions II and IV. These papers need not be related to the main topics, and may be on any aspect of inborn errors of metabolism. Summaries (not more than 500 words) of proposed papers should be submitted to the programme committee before April 14, 1968.

Further information and communication to:—
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