no means confined to data arising from experimental thymectomy.

To cover such a wide field in such a short space (78 pages) has led to a feeling of compression, and some aspects get scant treatment—for instance, there is little discussion of the effect of thymectomy in immunity to different organisms, and the very difficult and intriguing problem of auto-immune phenomena in thymectomized animals is only just mentioned. But as a short source of detached criticism of the apparently divergent views on the functions of the thymus, for paediatricians whose interest and critical faculties have both been excited by the many recent clinical papers in this field, this book can be strongly recommended. But they won’t end up with the comforting delusion that they know the whole story.


This volume is one of a series of monographs on various aspects of cancer, published for the International Union against Cancer. It is an up-to-date clinical and pathological account of the tumours of childhood, based mainly on the experience of the Manchester Children’s Tumour Registry which was started in 1953 and now has records of more than 1400 cases. The 14 contributors include members of the Manchester group and other workers, such as H. B. Stallard and the late Saul Keidan, who have special experience in various aspects of children’s tumours.

Tumours are now second to accidents in the list of main causes of death in children aged 1 to 15 years in both the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. Nevertheless, apart from the leukaemias, tumours in childhood are relatively uncommon. For example, other than brain tumours, no hospital region in this country has more than 50 children with non-leukaemic tumours, or more than 6 children with Wilms’ tumour, each year. In England and Wales between 1953 and 1962, the 3759 fatal cases of non-leukaemic tumours in children were treated in 601 hospitals—0.6 cases per hospital per year. In the opening chapter of this book these figures are used to make the point that the treatment of tumours in childhood must be centralized in big cities without regard to hospital regions. Centres would then have sufficient patients to employ specialist teams who would be able to gain experience and evaluate treatment methods.

Each group of tumours is featured in a separate chapter. Pathology, clinical features, treatment, and prognosis are discussed in detail with excellent and profuse illustrations, and there are numerous references. As might be expected from a world expert, the chapter by H. B. Stallard on retinoblastoma is outstanding.

For those who are not fortunate enough to be within referral distance of centres like Manchester, and therefore have to treat their own 0.6 cases a year, this work is a mine of useful information. The sections on treatment, however, necessarily reflect the present lack of decisive evidence as to which are the methods of choice. It might have been more helpful for the amateur therapist if these discursive reviews of treatment had been followed by a brief summary of the methods of treatment favoured by the authors at the present time.

It is a great credit to the Manchester team that they should have been invited to contribute to this international series of monographs on cancer. They have responded by producing a unique work of reference which should achieve international recognition. No medical library should be without it.


At first sight, 138 pages devoted to the subject of torticollis in infancy and childhood might seem excessive. But first and foremost this is a work of scholarship, beautifully produced by Charles C. Thomas in the Pediatric Surgical Monograph Series.

The published work from Hippocrates to the present day is carefully appraised and considered in the light of the author’s considerable personal experience of torticollis. The meat of the book is his prospective study of 99 patients, over a period of 6 years, with additional information gained from a further 156 patients included where relevant.

These cases are considered in great detail and the natural history of the condition and its relation to plagiocephaly and neonatal scoliosis is established. Many cherished and well-known views (and several lesser known ones), concerning the aetiology of the condition, are laid to rest, though Mr. Jones is unable himself to tell us the cause of this perplexing condition. He does, however, give a rational scheme of management.

Finally this work is a model of clinical research, which others engaged in similar projects could profitably follow.


This book reports the results of an investigation into the causes of blindness in children attending schools for the visually handicapped; the majority were registered as blind but some were partially sighted. Approximately 23% of the blind child population of England and Wales was examined, but the sample was not entirely representative as very few of the ineducable blind were seen, and the 0–4 age-group was under-represented. None the less, this is a very impressive and important document, and the authors stress genetic and biological
aspects as well as the medical aspects of the cases. They also carried out biochemical and cytogenetic analyses in some cases in order to try to establish the most exact diagnosis.

Blindness is considered under genetic and acquired causes, and the main sector deals with that probably due to genetic determination. One of the most important chapters deals with choroido-retinal degeneration, and the authors emphasize the variability of the conditions seen and the difficulty of exact diagnosis in some cases. They give a very good clinical account of the different types of retinal aplasia, but this is really a misnomer that was introduced for a group of conditions that are progressive degenerations rather than aplasias. The many associated abnormalities that occur with the choroido-retinal degenerations are also described and grouped as much as possible in definite categories. They describe at least 9 different autosomal recessive and 3 sex-linked recessive conditions. Several pedigrees are given of representative conditions. Tables in the appendices list all the cases in groups, and give details of genetic and clinical importance. There are also chapters on retinoblastoma, pseudoglioma, optic atrophy, cataracts, myopia, corneal lesions, colobomata, aniridia, buphthalmos, and complex syndromes. The importance of differentiating between somatic and genetic mutations in retinoblastoma is emphasized, and the chapters on optic atrophy and cataract are of more than usual interest, though the suggestion that hypoglycaemia is of importance in the causation of cataract needs much more substantiation.

Acquired blindness is divided into that occurring prenatally, perinatally, and postnatally. The authors emphasize that these causes are changing, and while 177 cases of retrolental fibroplasia were seen in this survey, future samples will contain far fewer of these cases. There are Tables at the end of the book summarizing the findings under different headings; there is a good index and an extensive bibliography. The authors are to be congratulated on producing this book which will be of especial value to geneticists and ophthalmologists, not only for the presentation of the material but also for delineating problems that still await further elucidation.


Dr. Agatha Bowley published her first edition under this title 12 years ago. She is now joined by Mr. Leslie Gardner for this second edition in which they have attempted to incorporate the increases in knowledge and improvement of methods occurring in the intervening years. In their Preface they state that the book is primarily for the non-specialist reader; and in this connexion they have the parents of handicapped children in mind, but also hope that the book will appeal to nurses, health visitors, teachers, therapists, social workers, and other professional workers. Clearly they aim for a wide audience, but present their material in a relatively small and short book. It is extremely difficult to present such a wide subject to such a wide range of readership, and they have not always succeeded in this task.

Four problems are selected for particular discussion, namely, the cerebral palsied child, the deaf child, the blind child, and the autistic child. Information is given about the incidence and nature of the various conditions, how the children are examined psychologically, and some of their problems and difficulties, particularly with regard to school placement, are discussed. Because of shortage of space, the descriptions have to be brief, and many readers will be left with their interest stimulated but not satisfied. Both authors have considerable practical experience in this work, and it is a pity they did not take this opportunity to provide readers with, on the one hand, more detailed information about the techniques used in their own speciality and, on the other hand, the lessons they have learnt over the years.

The index is so incomplete as to be almost useless. A number of interesting pictures are included but the quality of reproduction is not good, possibly because some are old pictures, and insufficient space has been allowed to permit reproduction at adequate size. The experience and knowledge of the authors merit a fuller publication than the present one.

International Symposium on the Management of the Rh Problem

This Symposium will be held in Milan, Italy, on October 9–11, 1969, and the following topics will be dealt with.

Prevention of Rh isoimmunization (Chairmen: B. Pollack (Raritan, New Jersey) and J. Gorman (New York)); diagnosis and prenatal treatment of fetal erythroblastosis (Chairmen: J. Queenan (New York) and B. Liley (Auckland)); and pediatric problems (Chairman: J. Lucey (Burlington, Vermont)).

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An International Symposium on Medical Problems of Adolescence

A Symposium will be held in Athens, Greece, on September 26–27, 1969, immediately preceding the 6th Middle Eastern Mediterranean Pediatric Congress, and will be conducted in English.

Programme Chairman is Professor Saul Blatman of New York, and the whole Symposium is under the Chairmanship of Professor Spyros Doxiadis, President of the Institute of Child Health.

For further information please write to the Institute of Child Health, Athens 608, Greece.