Book Reviews


' Hmm . . . odd facies . . . ears a bit low set perhaps . . . simian crease on one hand, and the thumbs look unusually broad . . . feet, would one call them rocker-bottomed? Heavens, I'm sure I must have seen this before somewhere, a chromosome defect perhaps, partial deletion of something or other? No, rather somebody's syndrome, I think, let me see . . . Treacher-Russell-de Lange? Or was it Rubinstein-Taybi-Ellis? I must look the darned thing up, but where is Heaven's sake? For those who find themselves from time to time subject to this kind of stressful situation, two kindly men, Sidney Gellis and Murray Feingold, have now provided invaluable support. Each of 85 syndromes is illustrated with colour photographs on one side of the page, and on the other a description, with brief notes on genetics and treatment, and a few key references. The selection is somewhat arbitrary, for instance osteogenesis imperfecta gains a place, though mental retardation is not a feature of this, and so does the recently described 'happy puppet syndrome', which has yet to win formal acceptance. But such quibbles are of little relevance to those of us who, lacking an 'encyclopaedic mind' (so commonly possessed, it seems, by others, to judge by obituary notices), frankly need all that we can get by way of an aide-mémoire of this kind in our day-to-day work.

The index is on an anatomical basis, so that under 'Lip' one finds 'Broad with cupid bow: infantile hypercalcaemia; Waardenburg'—Down-turned: Silver's—'Fissured: Down's—Fistula of upper: Ellis-Van Creveld', and so on.

The fairly low cost of the book is a pleasant consequence of its publication by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Mental Retardation: Diagnosis and Treatment.

It is not clear for whom this book is intended, though the editor says in his Preface that it aims 'to bridge the gaps, both real and semantic, that so often exist between [the various disciplines]'. The contributions of the 17 authors are illogically arranged; for example a chapter on metabolic and endocrine causes of retardation, and another on degenerative diseases causing retardation, are separated by four other assorted chapters including one on psychiatric management of the mentally retarded child. Little thought seems to have been given to the relevance and importance of the material included. The style is irritating; no one will be better informed nor will any gaps, semantic or otherwise, be bridged by such tautologous definitions as 'A psychological evaluation has been defined essentially as the activity engaged in by the psychologist, whether testing, interviewing, or whatever, which leads to his contribution in understanding or solving the problem.' We cannot recommend this book to paediatricians.


Although the volumes in this series are intended to act as summaries of recent work rather than as comprehensive textbooks, the first volume, entitled 'Modern Perspectives in Child Psychiatry' did in fact follow the pattern one would expect of a textbook in child psychiatry and was probably mainly of interest to workers in this field. The present volume not only draws upon a wider range of knowledge by including authors from many cultures, but at the same time deals extensively with modern research into basic principles of child development and its disorders, in a way that should make it as interesting and rewarding to paediatricians as to their psychiatric colleagues.

In his introduction Leo Kanner contributes an excellent and balanced account of the development of child psychiatry, emphasizing particularly its unfortunate neglect of pediatrics in its highly productive but limiting preoccupation with psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. He rightly criticizes Child Guidance Clinics for the rigid crystallization into what he calls the 'Holy Trinity' of psychiatrist, psychologist, and psychiatric social worker, and for the increasing isolation of psychiatry from the mainstream of medicine which has followed.

In the first section, dealing with basic principles of child development and their relevance to its disorders, D. H. Stott contributes a comprehensive review of research on the relationship between the physical and psychological hazards of pregnancy and later abnormalities in the child. Stella Chess reviews the research on the interaction of temperament, environment, and parental attitudes in the genesis of emotional disorders, emphasizing the need for investigation of neurological and physical handicap as well as temperamental and intellectual capacities. Though one-sided in its neglect of dynamic considerations, it forms a useful corrective to our current excessive preoccupation with unconscious emotional determination.

While Chess focuses largely on data from large-scale, superficial studies, M. David and G. Appel restore the balance with a beautiful study in which the interaction between mother and infant was observed in the greatest detail in a small number of families. Their demonstration of the profound way in which maternal attitudes are transmitted to infants is completely convincing, and though most practising child psychiatrists may have been forced to similar conclusions already, careful perception of the subtle mechanics of the process does much to reduce the uncertainties inevitable with the coarse observations on which routine clinical work must be based. This is complemented by a most interesting paper by P. H. Wolff describing in detail the attitudes and concerns of mothers before birth, events during labour and delivery, and the subsequent
evolution of the interaction between mother and child. The editor's own article on 'fathering' attempts to remedy the excessive preoccupation with mother-child relationships characteristic of child psychiatry until recently.

S. A. Szurek provides an excellent summary of the needs of the child at different stages of development. His account of the later stages seems to be marred by excessive fear (common among American workers) of the effects of trauma and conflict on the child. The account is otherwise clear and sensible. S. Lebovici, in a paper which I found particularly interesting, summarizes attempts to integrate knowledge derived from psychoanalytic investigation on the one hand, and research based on systematic observation of child development on the other.

J. Howells, in a second challenging paper, attacks the misleading equation of parental deprivation with separation from the parents. This is perhaps more relevant to those working in the field of child care, where careless misinterpretations of the research on maternal deprivation produce much damage through avoidance of separations in cases where this could be beneficial or even vital. An excellent and up-to-date review of the literature on relationship of cultures to child rearing practice and to personality development is provided by M. K. Opler, while more detailed studies of particular cultures are provided by L. Miller, who reviews research on the effects of child rearing in the environment provided by Israeli kibbutzim, and by K. Makita and K. Okonogi, whose account of Japanese attitudes and family dynamics demonstrates both the limited development of child psychiatry in Japan, together with excessive dependence on American views.

The second half of the book, dealing with clinical matters in which prominence is given to psychosomatic disorders, should also be of particular interest to paediatricians. The papers vary in emphasis, some basing themselves on the results of systematic research, some on clinical observation, many combining these two aspects. Over one hundred pages are given to papers on childhood psychosis, and these will probably be of more interest to the specialist in psychiatry. However, it is very helpful to have published together the three classic papers which first brought these conditions to general notice, by S. de Sanctis, T. Heller, and L. Kanner. L. Bender then contributes a good review of literature on childhood psychosis from these early papers up to 1966. This forms an excellent outline of present knowledge of the subject if one allows for a rigid tendency to emphasize genetic factors. W. Goldfarb balances this by a paper on the therapeutic management of these children which emphasizes the psychogenic aspects and the possibilities of limited improvement.

Dr. Howells has performed a valuable service by making available the excellent summaries of modern knowledge on psychiatric themes which these volumes largely contain. It is to be hoped that they will continue to appear, and this particular volume can be highly recommended to a wide audience.

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The emergence of nephrology as a subspecialty of paediatrics has not been reflected in an adequate text on the subject, and one concern in this review is to decide whether this gap has been filled. The author intends to provide 'a concise practical guide for paediatricians, urologists, general practitioners and residents in training who may be called upon to care for children with renal diseases'. The result is essentially a presentation of his clinical practice, and personal opinion is frequently unsupported by review of the available data. The style is easy to read, and the conclusions generally sound; the deficiencies, however, become apparent when the book is used as a reference to answer specific questions. Thus, for example, there is no discussion of the management of renal vein thrombosis and surprisingly little description of the physiology of disturbances of fluid and electrolyte equilibrium.

The conscious decision 'to omit or condense much controversial material' was inevitably determined by the size of the book, which is unfortunately not matched by the price; at elevenpence for each double page of text some would-be purchasers may be tempted by the cheaper, if illegal, expedient of Xeroting a library copy.

This book succeeds in its stated purpose and will be found valuable by paediatricians with clinical responsibility for children with renal disease. It is not, however, the definitive, 'state of the art' text, which is probably not within the scope of a single author.


This number of the B.M.B. provides a timely and critical review of the recent accomplishments in Human Genetics. Much of the data are presented in summary tables, and the well-chosen topics are linked together in a stimulating introduction by Professor Penrose.

Professor Polani's paper on Autosomal Imbalance excluding Down's syndrome gives a good idea of the range of cytogenetic abnormalities which have been discovered during the past decade. Concise clinical summaries of the common conditions are included, and the excellent bibliography contains well over 200 references. The other main group of structural aberrations, reciprocal translocations, is dealt with admirably by Professor Ford and Dr. Clegg. They first deal with the theoretical considerations of chromosome segregation during meiosis in the heterozygote, and then analyse the data collected from the 129 translocations known.

Structural abnormalities of sex chromosomes are dealt with authoritatively by Dr. Patricia Jacobs. The article includes clinical discussion of patients with