AUTUMN BOOKS


‘Wizard’ was a word frequently used by McCance to describe a good idea that appealed to his scientific imagination, and wizard is the word I would use to describe this book. It is a treasure trove of information – biographical, anecdotal, and scientific – about two figures who did so much to establish the scientific basis of paediatrics.

Known best in the paediatric world for their contributions to neonatology and childhood nutrition, the McCance and Widdowson partnership is surely remembered for the years of experimentation that Robert McCance and Elsie Widdowson did not turn their hands and minds to. David Southgate writes about the creation of their classic Chemical Composition of Foods, Douglas Black outlines their work on mineral metabolism (which included McCance’s determined attempts to make himself both salt depleted and alkalotonic, that nearly finished him off!), John Dickerson writes on body composition (Widdowson’s appetite for cutting up dead animals of all kinds, fetuses, stillbirths and corpses: in her 80s she spent three weeks dissecting 20 seals at Washington zoo), Brian Widdowson’s 20 seals at Washington zoo), Brian Widdowson’s

The book concludes with a fascinating account of unorthodox investigational techniques, so ably described by Professor David as ‘adventures into the bizarre’.

There are altogether 18 major chapters divided into 78 sections each following a similar basic plan with important background information, basic and applied scientific details and aspects of diagnosis and treatment all very clearly presented. I found especially valuable at the end of each section a short summary of what had been previously described together with some key references each accompanied by a pithy synopsis. Where there are deficiencies in knowledge these are critically addressed and if the reader wishes to pursue any topic in further detail there is a very comprehensive list of references at the end of each chapter to satisfy this curiosity.

I would warmly recommend this book to all health professionals who have to deal with children. Its value to adult specialists who see children with gastrointestinal complaints, respiratory and dermatological problems should also not be underestimated. I will certainly have this book in my clinic as it will give me the confidence I need to deal with the increasing number of parents I see who, along with many of our professional colleagues, are only too pleased to attribute protein symptoms in their children to dietary intolerances.

D. P. Davies
Professor of child health


For some time I have been in need of a guiding light through the jungle of myths, fantasies, and legends that so often surround the problems of food and food additive intolerances that can affect the health of children. I have now found such a guide in this excellent book.

Its main aim is to examine critically what is known about food and food additive intolerances and to establish their importance to paediatric illness in general. Helped moat ably by many acknowledged colleagues in Manchester and outside Professor David has succeeded well in these aims. An enormous number of references have been sifted through to produce this very readable book. All the definitions one would wish to have are given to equip the reader with the basic vocabulary of the subject. There are sections on the common intolerances: cows’ milk, soya, egg, and cereal. The problems of various food additive and salicylate intolerances and the clinical role of hypoglycaemic milk formulas are divided. These sections show how much is known about food intolerances to various food and food additives and the treatment of the alimentary problems which have been suspected for so many years and which are now thought to be the result of intolerance.

For the size of the book, each chapter is followed by a long list of references enabling the diligent reader to pursue the topic further.


Tim David has developed an unerring eye for picking ripe fruit from the tree of knowledge for the diligent reader, and this volume in this deservedly popular series offers a wonderful and at times exotic collection. The 11th volume opens with a clearly written and