

# Reviews of Recent Books



**Human Genetics.** *British Medical Bulletin*, vol. 17, no. 3, September 1961, pp. 87, \$3.25.

With remarkable rapidity the scientific endeavors of three groups of investigators are blending to form a medical concept which, although not new, certainly represents a change in emphasis. The field of genetics received impetus from such outstanding workers as Darwin, Mendel and Galton, but most clinicians considered hereditary disease to be little more than a fascinating curiosity. The "inborn errors of metabolism" as described so ably by Garrod represent a prototype against which many human ailments may be compared. Perhaps someday these will include such common disorders as essential hypertension, hypercholesterolemia and nephrolithiasis.

In the meantime the busy clinician, the geneticist and the biochemist alike have a need for exchange of information in order to attain a broader view of their chosen field. An excellent beginning to this is furnished by a recent volume of the *British Medical Bulletin* devoted to human genetics. In this collection of articles the methods for studying human chromosomes are detailed clearly, and some of the clinical applications of these studies are presented in a fashion which can be understood clearly by all who choose to read them. The lineage of inherited leukocytic abnormalities furnishes additional evidence for the inheritability of defects which may be observed by the alert scientist. Other topics are presented in equal detail and with remarkable clarity. These include the clinical syndromes which arise from faulty transmission of the sex chromosomes as well as further discussion of some of the inborn metabolic defects such as galactosemia and inheritable abnormalities of the serum proteins. The complexity of hereditary disease is well exemplified by such topics as inheritable differences in the manner in which drugs are metabolized and the genetic predictability of finger print patterns.

In terms of clinical disease, an important concept is emphasized in several places in this

collection of monographs. Three factors are essential for the acquisition of inheritable disease. The first of these is the absence or relative lack of a certain enzyme system. The second is a suitable environment which often is provided by the diet, and the third is a period of time sufficient for biochemical or structural changes to develop to the point of recognition. These are beautifully demonstrated in Wilson's disease, in which ceruloplasmin is decreased in concentration, dietary copper is absorbed readily and, with time, copper is deposited in certain tissues, particularly those of the brain stem, the liver and the kidneys. The precise enzyme system which is lacking in this disease has not been determined, but it has for galactosemia.

Some of the statistical manipulations which enable any investigator of hereditary traits to confirm or deny his hypothesis are presented in articles relating to multifactorial inheritance and frequency of the occurrence of congenital and hereditary disease.

This collection of articles relating to human genetics represents a well balanced and welcome source of reference primarily because it provides a broad view of the entire subject, and although not intended to be all inclusive, gives pertinent examples of each type of disorder.

R. E. HODGES

**Food Becomes You**, by Ruth M. Leverton. Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 1960, pp. 198, \$3.50.

The author describes this book as "a handbook to guide you in selecting the food that becomes you." Weight control is fully discussed under such chapter heads as wise weight, activity and calories, food and calories, trimming that figure, and rounding that figure. The facts are presented for many commonly accepted fallacies; common sense low calorie diets for a week are included; and effective ways to increase the calories in a diet are suggested.

Dr. Leverton cautions that one must guard against too many "lone-wolf" calories (those

from foods which do not contribute appreciably to protein, mineral or vitamin levels of the diet). In succeeding chapters she presents concise information on the nutrients; a daily food guide; fats in food, with a sound approach to their dietary inclusion in view of recent research; parents-in-waiting; the first dozen years; the teen years; food fads, and how to recognize the quack; what our money buys; and a table of nutritive values for household measure of food. Basic meal patterns for various age categories are described.

Dr. Leverton is Associate Director of The Institute of Home Economics, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture. She has had wide experience in many aspects of research in human nutrition. She is also a skilled university teacher, lecturer and writer who knows how to interpret nutrition.

Physicians and dietitians are often asked to recommend reliable books on nutrition for the layman. This book can be recommended without reservation. It is written in a concise, readable, entertaining style; it is informative

in content and altogether practical for each member of the family. Certainly books of this caliber should help to minimize the all too common propaganda of the faddist and charlatan.

C. ROBINSON

#### BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Books received for review by *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* are acknowledged in this column. As far as practicable, those of special interest are selected, as space permits, for extensive review.

**Live High on Low Fat**, by S. Rosenthal. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1962, pp. 328, \$6.75.

**Ciba Foundation Symposium on Renal Biopsy, Clinical and Pathologic Significance**, edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and M. P. Cammeron. Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1962, pp. 395, \$10.50.

**Nutritio et Dieta**, Vol. 3, No. 3. S. Karger, Basel/New York, 1961, pp. 54, \$3.70.

**Alcohol and Caffeine**, by H. Nash. Charles C Thomas, Springfield, 1962, pp. 169, \$7.25.

