Book Reviews

Journal of Medical Genetics (1976). 13, 335.

The Principles of Human Biochemical Genetics, 2nd ed. By Harry Harris. (Pp. 473; illustrated. \$20.50.) Amsterdam: North-Holland/American Elsevier. 1975.

The success of the first edition coupled with steady increase of knowledge in the field of human biochemical genetics has impelled Professor Harris to produce a new edition. This is appreciably larger than its predecessor and includes new information about the lysosomal storage disorders, heterozygosity, and the causes of allelic diversity.

The general form of the book remains unchanged and we are offered an excellent presentation of the advances in genetics during the past decade with a clear description and explanation of the interrelation of what previously were apparently unconnected observations and findings.

The reviewer found the chapters on gene mutations affecting rates of protein synthesis and on inborn errors of metabolism of particular interest in addition to the one on gene mutations and inherited disease; but there is an enormous amount of additional information for students and research workers in the field of human genetics. Once again there are appendices giving brief clear descriptions of most of the disorders mentioned in the book as well as a list of enzyme and protein polymorphisms with the methods for their detection.

There are one or two relevant references for each disorder mentioned in the appendices, but in addition there is a long list in alphabetical order at the end of the book.

This is a comprehensive as well as a thoughtful contribution to the literature and will be a valuable bench-side book for geneticists and rewarding reading for any individual interested in inherited disorders. Fortunately it has been produced in a less expensive paperback edition which brings it within the reach of the individual as well as the departmental purse.

G. M. KOMROWER

Ocular Manifestations of Inborn Errors of Carbohydrate and Lipid Metabolism. By J. François. (Bibliotheca Ophthalmologica No. 84.) (Pp. viii + 175; 85 figures + 1 table. SFr. 78; DM. 74; approx. U.S. \$35.50.) Basel: S. Karger. 1975.

The ophthalmic manifestations of inborn errors of carbohydrate and lipid metabolism and of the mucopolidoses are described in this expensive monograph which, as is usual in such studies by François, contains extensive lists of references.

This monograph will be of most value to ophthalmologists but may also be of use to paediatricians and geneticists when reference to the ocular abnormalities in these errors is required.

BARRIE JAY

Genetics and Psychopharmacology. (Modern Problems of Pharmacopsychiatry Vol. 10.) Volume Editor J. Mendlewicz. (Pp. viii + 132; 15 figures + 25 tables. SFr. 58; DM. 55; approx. U.S. \$24.50.) Basel, Munich, Paris, London, New York, Sydney: S. Karger. 1975.

Genetical polymorphism in enzyme activity has important implications in the drug treatment of psychiatric disorders, and probably also in their incidence. The present volume reviews this field, in which most work has been done on monoamine oxidase. To date there have been fewer investigations on the more important tricyclic group of drugs, and no confirmed positive findings that would give a lead to the underlying biochemical basis of the psychoses.

No price in English currency is given, but a rough calculation from Swiss, German, and USA currencies suggests 10 pence a page, too much for those not doing research in this fascinating field.

R. T. C. PRATT

Genetic Forms of Hypogonadism. Edited by Daniel Bergsma. (Birth Defects: Original Article Series, The National Foundation—March of Dimes, Vol. XI, No. 4.) (Pp. vi + 162; illustrated. \$13.95.) Stratton Intercontinental Medical Book Corporation, New York and London. 1975.

The meeting from which these papers were drawn, was held in California in 1974 and was another in the series of 'Birth Defects' conferences.

'Genetic Forms of Hypogonadism' has no introduction and if the omission is for reasons of economy, it might have been better to include a perspective of the subject as a whole and omit one of those papers (and there are few) that does not warrant regular perusal.

It is startling to find that this is Vol. XI, No. 4, in the original article series. The superb 'Atlas and Compendium of Birth Defects' and the 'New Syndrome Identification' series, both edited, as is this volume, by Daniel Bergsma, have become standard reading for the medical geneticist and tempt him to make place for 'Genetic Forms of Hypogonadism' on his shelf. There is a good classification of hereditary disorders of sexual development and new thoughts about the subdivisions of male pseudohermaphroditism. The status of phenotypic/karyotypic correlation concerning the sex chromosomes is detailed enough to make one want to refer back to it, as is a summary of our current knowledge of enzyme disorders of the adrenal cortex and gonad. However, as a previous reviewer of another volume in the series has noted, the individual volumes are not as important as the series which, as a whole, now covers a substantial portion of the spectrum of birth defects.

MICHAEL BARAITSER