The next part, 'On the basis of disorder in the nervous system', begins with a sketchy section on inborn errors of metabolism. Much hope has been invested in the study of this group of conditions, many of which are identified specific enzymopathies, as a likely area in which to make discoveries concerning the interaction between biochemical change and psychological function. It is disappointing, therefore, that though the individual contributions are of high quality, they are pitifully few in number, and do not serve to cover this important field at all adequately within the context of a book devoted to the future of the brain sciences. James Austin, on inborn errors of glycolipid metabolism, provides particularly interesting matter regarding the direct bearing of altered metabolism on the structure and function of nervous tissue. This is getting close to the nub of the crucial problem of how genetically-determined biochemical disorders affect intellectual function, and it would have been fitting if more space could have been given to this theme.

A more appropriate allotment of space is given to the genetics and biochemistry of the psychoses. This opens with a full and critical discussion by James Stabenau of twin and family studies in schizophrenic and affective psychoses. This is followed by a number of competent reviews of biochemical changes that may be of aetiological significance in schizophrenia, involving mainly dimethoxyphenethylamine, urinary indoles, and immunoglobulin. Similarly, changes involving the biogenic amines, electrolyte balance, and hormones in affective psychoses are discussed. These sections give a good survey of the areas in which leads are being sought to an understanding of the constitutional bases of the psychoses.

Like the proceedings of most conferences, this book suffers from a certain patchiness in emphasis on detail and lack of comprehensiveness, though the contributions are consistently of high quality. The diversity of disciplines represented also leads to a rather lumpy whole. It is a book, parts of which would be interesting to readers of very many different disciplines, but it is unlikely to give sustained interest to the medical geneticist unless he has a particular interest in one of the specialized lines of biological approach to brain research represented here.

Valerie Cowie


The choice of subjects and the high level of the contributions make this volume of Proceedings of exceptional interest. The complexities of the clinical aspects of muscular dystrophy were discussed by the President (J. D. Allan) and J. N. Walton, while the biochemical aspects were dealt with by R. J. Pennington, V. Dubowitz, B. McArdle, and P. Hudson. These papers and the discussions on them—excellently summarized—occupy half this volume and summarize admirably current knowledge and the problems at issue. The rest of the text roams widely over strictly biochemical studies (such as those by Raine and by Jatzkewitz on sphingolipidoses) and on biochemical lesions in such affections as Wilson's disease (J. M. Walsh) and inherited brain disorders (E. M. Brett). Well edited and well produced, this volume is more than a report of transient interest.

Arnold Sorsby


Most publications dealing with human chromosomal aberrations concentrate on the physical abnormalities. There is, therefore, added interest for a volume which attempts to assess the effects of abnormal chromosome constitutions on the minds of the patients.

The author, who is chief of the children's psychiatric service in the canton of Berne, set out to answer the question how far chromosomal aberrations correspond to specific psychiatric syndromes. The study is based on his own patients as well as a mass of published work which, with over 1200 entries, takes up a third of the pages. Even so, some important references are omitted. On the credit side, the text is very readable.

The author concludes that the psychiatric abnormalities produced by different chromosomal aberrations are non-specific. The results of different autosomal aberrations are such as would be found in any early-occurring brain damage. Moreover, if large numbers of sex chromosomes are present in excess, the effects produced are similar to those found in autosomal abnormalities.

The larger part of the text is concerned with the mental problems of patients with Klinefelter's and Turner's syndromes and their reactions to hormone therapy. The author thinks that the psychological differences between Klinefelter and Turner patients are largely due to their respective environments, because they will be judged by different criteria and, therefore, may be expected to react differently. Even if geneticists may not agree with all of Dr. Züblin's conclusions, they would do well to consider them.

Ursula Mittwoch


This book is the product of an International Symposium on Diagnosis and Treatment of Disorders Affecting the Intrauterine Patient, held at Dorado, Puerto Rico, 29–31 October, 1967, in commemoration of the bicentennial of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, College of Physicians and Surgeons,