be well advised to consult this book first, for it provides a clear indication of what the practising physician should know.

The first chapter gives a straightforward account of how one investigates the genetic component in disease, with an introduction on the interaction of genetic factors and environmental experience. The next five chapters discuss the three main classes of genetically-determined disease—conditions due to chromosome aberrations, conditions due to mutant genes of large effect, and conditions due to numerous genes of individually small effect. These chapters outline the basic principles of medical genetics in a brief but thoroughly readable fashion. The jargon of genetics, which is so often a deterrent, has been reduced to a minimum and the examples are few and well chosen. Certain aspects, such as meiosis and its consequences, are treated more sketchily than they perhaps deserve. However, this is a brief introductory account, and one is impressed less by the omissions than by the quantity of hard fact that it has proved possible to include.

The seventh chapter, and the last of the *Lancet* articles, is a useful account of the fundamentals of genetic counselling. The author emphasizes the growing importance of antenatal diagnosis by amniocentesis in the prevention of genetic disease, for in an increasing number of conditions selective abortion may enable parents at high risk to have a normal family.

The second to last chapter provides a list of the more common conditions due to mutant genes of large effect. The cautionary paragraph about the pitfalls of wrong diagnosis and genetic heterogeneity which accompanies this list might well be underlined to emphasize the dangers of giving a genetic prognosis on inadequate information. In the final chapter the author discusses present methods and future prospects for the control and prevention of genetically-determined disease. The improved detection of heterozygotes for recessive and X-linked conditions, the importance of intrauterine screening, the theoretical possibility of using genetic linkage for the early diagnosis and control of dominant conditions, and the use of organ transplants in the treatment of biochemical disorders are well considered.

Each chapter is accompanied by references to specific points, and there is a comprehensive index. The book is inexpensive, well produced, and there are few misprints; the only one worth noting is the Lesch–Nyhan eponym which is spelt differently and incorrectly in both the text and the original *Lancet* article. This little book can be thoroughly recommended to all students of medical genetics as an up-to-the-moment introductory text.

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Corrigendum

An Inherited Kidney Disease of Mice Resembling Human Nephronophthisis by Mary F. Lyon and E. V. Hulse, March 1971, Vol. 8, pp. 41–48.

The article cited at the end of the section on methods of pathological investigations, p. 42, column 2, is by Watts and not by Mole and Watts, and the correct reference is:

Watts, R. H. (1971). A simple capillary tube method for the determination of the specific gravity of 25 and 50 μl quantities of urine. *Journal of Clinical Pathology*, **24**. (In press.)