become primary physicians and who will need to understand the decisions of urologists to whom they refer patients. However the book has many merits and its approach serves its intended audience well. Despite this it is difficult to recommend it to British students who will be confused by the differences between the American practices described in it and those they will see and be taught in their medical schools. This is a pity because the student will learn a lot from reading this book which could provide a model for anyone considering a similar volume for British students.

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Frontiers in Histamine Research: a Tribute to Heinz Schild. Based on an International Symposium held at Jouy-en-Josas (near Paris), France, 25–27 July 1984. Edited by C. Robin Ganellin and Jean-Charles Schwartz. *Advances in the Biosciences*. Vol. 51. Pp. xvi + 442, illustrated. Pergamon Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto, Sydney, Paris, Frankfurt, 1985. £50.00, \$80.00.

This book is a compilation of some of the papers presented at an International Symposium in France in 1984. In the preface, there is a brief account of the work of Professor Heinz Schild written by Sir James Black. The remaining 45 papers are grouped into 8 sections. These include papers on the receptor biochemistry and pharmacology of histamine and its distribution, release, metabolism and action in the brain. There then follow sections on the actions of histamine in the gut, cardiovascular system and immune responses. The last section is devoted to an account of the mechanisms of histamine release.

Most of the contents of this volume refer to animal work, but provide a good account of the pharmacology underlying clinical research and use of histamine blocking drugs. Clinicians will be intrigued by the paper by Bauman and others on the use of combined H_2 receptor stimulation and phosphodiesterase inhibition as a new therapeutic approach for patients with congestive heart failure. The cost of the volume is representative of that of symposium proceedings and this may limit its purchase to libraries where it will be a very useful addition.

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Genetic Biochemical Disorders. Philip F. Benson and Anthony H. Fensom. *Oxford Monographs on Medical Genetics*. No. 12. Pp. xx + 692, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto, 1985. £55.00.

This is a book remarkable in some ways (its extensive referencing for example) and infuriating in others. The text covers the traditional areas included in the field of inborn

errors, predominantly the defects of intermediary metabolism. It is a daunting task for any two authors to set themselves. Their bigger rival texts are multi-author – Bondy and Rosenberg or the classic text of Stanbury and his colleagues for example. In the sense that this book provides something smaller and cheaper it meets a need but it is not entirely successful. It succeeds particularly in that it contains a large amount of information and a staggering reference list (more than 3,500 on the reviewer's calculations).

In a text of this kind there is the problem of balance and inevitably no two authors can be uniformly knowledgeable over the range of material this book covers. So for example more than a quarter of the text is given over to lysosomal storage disorders and an equal space to amino acid and organic acid disorders. About one-third of the text remains for disorders of purines and pyrimidines, carbohydrates, porphyrins, red cells, lipids and lipoproteins, steroids, copper metabolism and a miscellany of other disorders. It is quite evident where the authors' real experience lies and this is supported by the many clinical illustrations in the section on mucopolysaccharidoses and other storage disorders. There are no clinical illustrations in other sections of the book except for a child with xeroderma pigmentosum. There are other oddities of selection. Copper diseases are covered for example but another trace metal, zinc and acrodermatitis enteropathica is excluded. The miscellaneous selection includes relatively brief accounts of intestinal enzyme deficiencies and genetic forms of rickets. Because of their brevity they do not add to the book. Frequently clinical management is ignored – how to deal with acute attacks of porphyria for example.

In fairness the authors indicate in the Preface that therapy was not their chief objective in producing the book. The reviewer is left with the strong impression that the authors would have produced a better book if they had concentrated on the metabolic fields they know well and given more thought to balance, illustration, presentation (which is rather dull) and therapy. They must however be credited with a text bringing together a large amount of information which will make it a useful source of reference.

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Growth Disorders in Infants, Children and Adolescents. Marvin L. Rallison. Pp. xi + 476, illustrated. John Wiley, New York, Chichester, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore, 1986. £35.80.

This book provides, in a concise form, a review of normal growth in children from the fetus through to adolescence and in the second half considers disorders of growth at different stages in the child's development. The first six chapters describe methods for measuring intra- and extrauterine growth. Mechanisms for controlling growth in both these environments are considered, although, presumably due to the space available, this is lamentably brief when the endocrine regulation of growth in childhood is considered.