

Editorials

Gilbert B. Forbes, MD

Chief Editor

With this January 1973 issue of the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF DISEASES OF CHILDREN, Gilbert B. Forbes, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Professor of Radiation Biology and Biophysics at the University of Rochester School of Medicine assumes the responsibilities of Chief Editor. He brings to the position talent as a writer, experience as an editor, and stature in the world of pediatrics. These are strong statements but to document is easy. At my elbow is an impressive bibliography with well over 100 entries. The titles of papers disclose a wide range of interest in the problems of pediatrics—pneumothorax, chylothorax, pyloric stenosis, salicylate intoxication, management of severe infections, glycogen storage disease, scarlet fever, and poliomyelitis. Rigidly scientific are his clear expositions of isotope methodology used to determine body composition with respect to bone, fat, lean mass, water, and electrolytes. Especially refreshing are his contributions to a



series of papers published in the JOURNAL under the title "Classics from Medical Literature." There are two of these; one tells the story of the birth of the modern era of chemotherapy and the other that of silver nitrate in eradicating ophthalmia neonatorum. Both display rare skill in

philological composition. They were written with his wife, Grace, as a coauthor; she represents serendipity for the JOURNAL.

Gilbert Forbes has been as associate editor of *Nutrition Reviews* since 1961 and a member of the Editorial Board of the JOURNAL since 1964. He has studied and taught in Rochester, NY, St. Louis, Dallas, Los Alamos, NM, and Oxford, England. During the year 1960-1961 he was President of the Society for Pediatric Research. These many contacts in practice and research coupled with a natural ability for leadership have won the respect of colleagues all over the United States and also across the sea.

Finally a word should be added about a personality trait. Enthusiasm for whatever he undertakes has always characterized Gilbert Forbes. The attribute is contagious. It will be caught by those who with him are to meet the challenge of satisfying the readers of the JOURNAL.

A. ASHLEY WEECH, MD

CHEMICAL GROWTH IN INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD

Modern medicine is undergoing a change from the morphological to the functional point of view. Disease processes are being described more frequently in physiological and biochemical terminology. Mass connotes a static system, chemical processes are dynamic; and life is chemical.—Forbes GB: Medical Progress.—*J Pediatr* 41:202-232, 1952.

"Cgs" and a New Editor

With this issue the JOURNAL embarks on a dual venture—a shift to metrification and a new editor.

Henceforth all measurement units are to be in what physicists call the centimeter-gram-second (cgs) system, which superseded the foot-pound-second system many years ago. The United States remains one of the few nonmetrical societies in the Western World, and the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF DISEASES OF CHILDREN together with other American Medical Association journals is proud to have a role in furthering the cause of metrification in this country. (What is needed now is someone to

compose proverbs and aphorisms in metric terms!)

With regard to the second venture, my hope is to emulate the editorial prowess of my predecessor, Ashley Weech, and to build on the foundation he has so skillfully laid this past decade. The JOURNAL will remain oriented towards the broad avenues of pediatrics—the clinical, the educational, the investigative, and the societal. The goals of the JOURNAL clearly transcend its title.

Our editorial obligations are heavy. The AMERICAN JOURNAL OF DISEASES OF CHILDREN with its 25,400 subscribers (including 2,000 from abroad)

has the largest subscriber list of any pediatric journal in the world. Our job will be to keep open the lines of communication between writers and readers.

Long ago Edward Gibbon wrote: "Conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius." A journal nicely meets this dualistic ideal: the reader can, in a sense, converse with the author, not face to face, but in the quiet of his study, alone with the thoughts and ideas which the author has put on the printed page. Our challenge is to fuel his mind.

G.B.F.

AWAY WITH INCHES, FEET, AND YARDS: THE METRIC SYSTEM'S IN THE CARDS

OWED TO METRIFICATION

Hail, thou scientific system!
Centimeters? How we've missed 'em!
(When cubic, they're now milliliters;
When running now, we run in meters.)
Our measurements become a cinch
With th' downfall of the worn-out inch.

"But alas!"—we ancient poets cry,
"The meter's gone from *poetry*;
New poets try to get along
With stuff they can't put into song."

PARK J. WHITE, MD
St. Louis