A marked association with maternal age was shown in the incidence of anencephalus. The mothers of these cases tended to be older than those who gave birth to normal children. A similar effect was found in hydrocephalus. In spina bifida the effect of maternal age was scarcely noticeable, but a high proportion of these cases were first-born. Maternal age was considerably greater than the normal in cases of mongolism. There was a striking excess of primiparæ among the mothers of cases of hypospadias. L. S. PENROSE.

Sex-linked Microphthalmos sometimes associated with Mental Deficiency. (*Brit. Med. Journ., Dec.* 18, 1937.) *Roberts, J. A. F.*

A pedigree is given in which microphthalmia occurs in males in four generations. The inheritance appears, in every case, to be through a normal mother, and it is concluded that the disease is a sex-linked recessive condition. There was considerable variation in the clinical signs in the affected persons, and sometimes the eyes were unequally affected in the same individual. A number of the microphthalmics were mentally defective, though some were of normal mentality. There was no example of mental deficiency in the family without blindness.

L. S. PENROSE.

The Genetic Basis of Amaurotic Family Idiocy. (*Journ. Genetics, vol. xxvii, No.* 3, *p.* 363, *Aug.*, 1933.) *Slome, D.*

A study of the infantile type of amaurotic idiocy, based on the existing literature, gives a careful analysis of the familial appearances of the disease. The juvenile form, genetically analysed by Sjögren, is determined by a single recessive Mendelian factor; the infantile form has not hitherto been critically examined from this point of view. Cases have been described in most parts of the world, but the majority have occurred among Jews. It is impossible for parents to be affected, for the mean age of onset of the disease is 6 months and it lasts about a year, terminating fatally. The incidence among sibs can be shown to be in close agreement with expectation on the hypothesis that the condition is a Mendelian recessive character. A slight excess of affected females over affected males is recorded. Consanguinity of the parents is recorded in about 30% of the cases; from 15 to 20% of the parents are first cousins. These ratios are highly significant, and they agree closely with the requirements of the Lenz-Dahlberg formula for the behaviour of rare recessives; moreover, the disease is rarer among Gentiles than among Jews, and the incidence of consanguineous parentage of amaurotic idiots is greater among Gentiles than among Jews. Taking all the evidence together, the writer has no hesitation in ascribing the infantile form of amaurotic idiocy to the action of a single recessive gene. L. S. PENROSE.

Clinical and Genetic Investigations of Mental Defect with Congenital Cataract [*Klinische und vererbungsmedizinische Untersuchungen über Oligophrenie mit kongenitaler Katarakt*]. (*Zeitschr. f. d. Ges. Neur. u. Psychiat., vol. clii, No.* 2, *p.* 263, 1935.) *Sjögren, T.*

In an investigation of blind, mentally defective patients in Sweden, the writer discovered, among 30 families, 44 cases (26 males and 18 females) of bilateral congenital cataract. The syndrome, which usually implies idiocy, is not progressive and does not include neurological abnormalities. The stature of the patients was usually less than normal. The disease is familial, and in no sibship was there a case of either cataract alone or mental defect alone. Parents were not affected. The families did not appear to be grouped together geographically. Clinical descriptions of the patients and their family histories are supplied in detail. The main cause is thought to be a recessive factor.

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