topics covered are dental complications of cancer, skin cancer, late effects of treatment, and nutritional consequences of cancer. Other chapters are revised from the first edition and cover the full spectrum of childhood malignancy, its natural history, detection, and treatment. The book is essentially a reference work and each topic has an extensive bibliography.

There is no shortage of books on paediatric oncology, but few attempt to be as comprehensive a review as this one. The problem the author/editors face, of course, is keeping up to date in a field that is changing rapidly, but it would seem that they have done as well as possible in this respect with only studies reported in the last 18–24 months failing to be included. Revisions, where appropriate, are extensive. The use of atrial catheters and monoclonal antibodies are discussed for the first time, for example. The balance throughout the book is good, advice is on the whole sound, and opinions are mainstream. Thorny areas like the dying child are handled well and contain more common sense than such topics usually evoke.

Perhaps the acid test of this type of book is whether it opens the literature on some relatively obscure point from an academic ward round as easily as it provides basic clinical information for the non-specialist. This one does. It is thus both a good desk top book for oncologists and a good library book for other paediatricians. Despite its high price it can be recommended.

J S LILLEYMAN

Paediatrics. Edited by H M Maurer. Pp 1077: £28 hardback. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

There was a time when a physician would have tackled the single handed authorship of such a book, pitched comfortably between the limp covered student texts and the weightier source of reference for the perplexed or curious paediatrician. Now that paediatrics has its own specialties, Professor Maurer has to call upon 48 of his colleagues, mainly working in Virginia, to contribute to this 35 chapter book. The early chapters contain the basic sciences of paediatrics—nutrition, growth, and development; then discussion of the newborn, the adolescent, and community health; and lastly social, emotional, and developmental problems. The other 75% of the book is given to

descriptions of body system diseases; a useful chapter on major organ failure; and the familiar last 3 chapters of radiology, pharmacology, and laboratory values.

Print, photographs (especially x-rays), and figures are exceptionally clear; chapters finish with a short list of references, and there is a full index. Most of the systems chapters display an admirable blend of knowledge and clarity but that on genetics and inborn errors of metabolism might have been better split: in 30 pages 5 authors have little elbow room. Overlap is inevitable—for example there are 2 similar tables of theophylline drugs—and editing is not always firm. The major discussion about vesicoureteric reflux is consigned to the radiology chapter rather than with urinary tract infection (where reflux is referred to as a urographic finding). Otherwise comments reflect differences in transatlantic practice: penicillamine, monocomponent insulins, sodium cromoglycate, and nebulised adrenergic bronchodilator drugs receive little or no discussion and the suggested laboratory investigations in childhood asthma would merit pruning before confronting a hawkish MRCP examiner. Drug abuse, genital infections, and contraception probably lie outwith the repertoire of the British paediatrician and it is sad to see that failure to thrive is omitted from an otherwise first class chapter on social and emotional problems.

Do not be deterred by these criticisms (they were solicited in the introduction)—especially if you are a candidate or examiner in higher examinations. This moderately priced volume will see you through most such encounters and there are few British rivals—yet.

T L CHAMBERS

Child Health in a Changing Environment. By G J Ebrahim. Pp 231: £9.50 hardback, £4.50 paperback. London: MacMillan International, 1982.

This book is written for paediatricians and all professionals responsible for the care of children. It aims to provide through facts and figures an understanding of the dimensions of childhood disadvantage and the inequalities and inequities existing in our present world society, and of the degree of improvement reported from recent interventions.

The author's intention is to supply

readers with the 'strong voice of science' with which to act more effectively as advocates for children in the corridors of power—political and social, where decisions are made that can effect a better, more healthy environment. He believes rightly that such facts and figures are necessary to change political will towards providing greater care for the less privileged and overcome the powerful vested interests that would retain the status quo.

The author has indeed put a very extensive survey of recent published reports at the disposal of the reader, but is this enough? It will need a stronger voice than science to influence the present emphasis on collective, self centred, commercial productivity and the enormous expenditure on the arms race.

Such a voice does indeed surface at intervals throughout this book in the moral indignation at the magnitude of the plight of children that is underlined by these figures, though it stops short of that ultimate imperative which proclaims that it would be better to be cast into the depths of the sea anchored to a millstone, than to offend one of these little ones.

The book will face the criticism of those who feel the changes it supports are too uncomfortable in their challenge to the establishment or too familiar and unrealistic to make any impression on the current trends. It will be rejected by those who feel it is 'tangential to main health issues' and no part of a doctor's business and by some, to whom it will appear as preaching proletarian left wing militancy.

I hope the book will be read by many for it makes a substantial contribution to the evidence upon which advocates for children must be built—and urgently.

J PAGET STANFIELD

The Nature and Nurture of Twins. By E M Bryan. Pp 223: £9.95 paperback. London: Balliere Tindall, 1983.

Parents are naturally full of anxiety when told they are to expect twins and it is helpful for the obstetrician or paediatrician who may be consulted to have at hand a reasonably comprehensive account of the subject as is provided by Dr Bryan in her monograph. This begins with a rather cursory account of twinning in mythology and literature, which may be useful or even interesting should have at least attempted to relate primitive ideas to the facts of life as we know them today.

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—including those discovered by psychoanalysis. The writer is on firmer ground in dealing with the practical aspects of twinning: its possible causes; its epidemiology; its relation to perinatal mortality; the problems it presents to mothers, fathers, and siblings and indeed the twins themselves; and the light it throws as an experiment of nature on human reproduction in general. There is a particularly good section on the loss of a twin and how difficult this makes it for a mother inhibited from mourning the dead baby from needing to care for the living one—who then may be cast as a scapegoat by the family in their bereavement. Clearly there are emotional problems connected with twinning that make the comparison of identical twins separated at birth (by which time all sorts of environmental differences may have already made their impact) not at all the straightforward separation of the effects of nature and nurture that followers of the late Dr Elliot Slater would have us believe. In this context it is surprising that the author does not refer to Keil Kessell's earlier book; but her preoccupations are much more to do with how to manage, for instance, breast feeding than what lessons if any, are to be learned about the origins of emotional illness. Within her limits she succeeds admirably and hers is a book which the reviewer would be glad to have his copy of, though others may jib at the price of nearly £10.00 for a paperback which in Scandinavia would probably have been published as a supplement to the *Acta*.

As it is, every neonatal unit should have its copy for instant reference, and most paediatricians will be tempted to buy it. At a time when too many books are published this is one that was worth writing and is worth reading.

J A DAVIS

Shorter notices

An Atlas of Oxygen-Cardiorespirograms in Newborn Infants. By R Hutch, A Hutch, and G Rooth. Pp 256: £25.00 hardback. London: Wolfe Medical Publications, 1983.

One hundred and fifteen excerpts of simultaneous recordings of heart rate, respiration, and transcutaneous oxygen tension from healthy newborn infants are presented in this catalogue. Selected from the records of 3000 babies the aim has

been to show the effects of activity and the limits of normal variability. A detailed statistical analysis emphasises the complexity of these covariations. This book will fascinate students of 'normality' in term infants but does not attempt to deal with the even more difficult problem posed by variability in preterm infants.

Lead Versus Health. Sources and Effects of Low Level Lead Exposure. Edited by M Rutter and R R Jones. Pp 379: £18.50 hardback. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1983.

This volume is the proceedings of last year's 'Clear' symposium on low level lead exposure and children's health. Sections on the sources, toxicity, and neuropsychological effects of lead include work published elsewhere—for example Needleman's important tooth lead studies. The discussions are valuable and Professor Rutter's introduction and conclusions form excellent reviews of the subject. With the current political and scientific debate, the book should attract attention from paediatricians interested in this area of preventive medicine.

Getting Through to Your Handicapped Child: a Handbook for Parents, Foster Parents, Teachers, and Anyone Caring for Handicapped Children. By E Newson and J Hipgrave. Pp 134: £3.95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Two experienced psychologists have written a good account of behavioural methods for improving communication between handicapped children and those who care for them. The book is divided, chapter by chapter, into an account of general principles and a mixture of examples and exercises suitable for intelligent, literate parents and care staff. Someone needs to write a cartoon version for the others, perhaps the majority. There is a useful bibliography.

Prevention of Spina Bifida and other Neural Tube Defects. Edited by John Dobbing. Pp 272: £17.60 hardback. London: Academic Press, 1983.

All 6 chapters are in some way connected with the hypothesis that neural tube defects might be preventable by multivitamin supplements. Most of the material has already been published. More interesting are the authors' critical comments of

one another's papers, sometimes accompanied by a rebuttal. The book neither provides the answer to whether vitamins are any use nor to whether the proposed MRC trial is a good way to find out, but careful reading might lead to a slightly better informed sort of ignorance.

The Normal Child—Some Problems of the Early Years and Their Treatment, eighth edition. By R S Illingworth. Pp 374: £12.00 hardback. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1983.

The regular appearance of new editions since its first publication 30 years ago is itself a tribute to this classic. The book remains a compact and clearly written guide of value to all those concerned with children.

Pediatric Neurology. Edited by T W Farmer. Pp 768: £61.00 hardback. Philadelphia: Harper and Row, 1983.

The 26 contributors from the USA provide a useful medium sized textbook. Its use for reference is enhanced by the clear presentation and comprehensive references at the end of each section.

1983 Year Book of Paediatrics. Edited by F A Osiki and J A Stockman. Pp 502: £28.00 hardback. Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers, 1983.

Approximately 280 articles are summarised in about 400 words plus relevant tables or illustrations and are grouped together under the different systems. Nearly all the articles were originally published in American or British journals between March 1981 and February 1982.

Atlas of Human Prenatal Morphogenesis. By J E Jirasek. Pp 157: \$65 hardback. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983.

This is an excellent photographic record of human development from conception until the end of organogenesis. Much use is made of microdissection, the scanning electron microscope, and surface histochemistry—all of which aid comprehension of these complex processes. The quality of the illustrations is extremely good and the explanatory text concise and easy to follow. This book would be very helpful used in conjunction with one of the standard embryology textbooks.