The general effect of reading these volumes straight through is of attending a large multidisciplinary symposium. There is repetition, extreme variation in style, content, and complexity. Some contributors use that lame phrase, 'space does not permit. . .', others describe, with detailed tables, obscure neurological rarities. Other authors forget that 'treatment and management' is their remit. There is a shortage of editorial attention, though they appear once (in square brackets) as referees during a virulent dismissal of signing for deaf children—maybe to placate its advocates elsewhere. Book 1, too often, is discursive, with a stately vagueness, ('not infrequent', 'relatively common') and insufficient contemporary data and controlled results of intervention. David Taylor's characteristic contributions are delightful—his case histories are compelling—but he needed reminding not to tell the same story twice.

Textbooks are best not produced in two volumes, and without a common index. These 930 pages could be reduced to 500, using the ruthlessness of journal editors, some chapters can be jettisoned. The paperback volumes, however, are remarkably cheap, and include contributions that are well researched, packed with contemporary references, and of immediate help in the management of ill and handicapped children.

J W PARTRIDGE

The Adolescent Years: The Ups and Downs of Growing Up. By J Buckler. Pp 152: £8.00 hardback. Castlemead Publications, Ware, 1987.

In the first half of this book Dr Buckler describes the events of puberty while the second part contains information about the associated features of adolescence. As one would expect from this author, the former is comprehensively dealt with while the latter contains an account of many of the problems that may concern a teenager. The views expressed are those of a caring parent as well as those of a specialist in growth and development. I was particularly impressed at the sensitive way in

which the more delicate subject matter was discussed. It is unfortunate that adolescent medicine is poorly represented in the United Kingdom and many associated problems fall in between the specialities of paediatrics and adult medicine. Fortunately, Dr Buckler's book provides much material to unify these subjects.

I was delighted that large sections of the text were devoted to psychological development. My main criticism, however, is that important issues such as drug dependency, contraception, and unwanted pregnancy were allocated an inappropriately short discussion and, of greater importance, practical guidance was limited.

There have been several books about adolescence published recently but I believe this to be one of the better ones. The cost is reasonable, especially considering this is a hardback edition. Although written primarily for parents and associated health workers, I am sure this book will be most eagerly received by teenagers themselves, to whom I shall have no hesitation in recommending it.

R STANHOPE

Fluid Therapy in Childhood. By T L Chambers. Pp 140: £8.50 softback. Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987.

This short book is designed to be read while waiting for laboratory results or watching an ill patient; it will be a great help to all those who have that responsibility. It provides uncomplicated advice on choosing the correct biochemical tests, the accurate interpretation of the results, and the safe, immediate treatment of a sick child. The first third of the book considers the theoretical principles governing fluid balance, the normal mechanisms of regulation, and the aetiology of pathological states. The terminology is simply defined. The tables and figures are outstandingly clear. The calculations of normal needs and abnormal replacements are provided, and the enteral route is not considered outdated. The rest of the book discusses the commoner circumstances in which the body's regulatory mechanisms become dis-

ordered: gastroenteritis, diabetes mellitus, kidney disease, adrenocortical failure, hypercalcaemia, poisoning, and surgery. There is a particularly helpful chapter by Mr R W Griffiths on the burned child, which recognises that most of these problems are not dealt with by paediatricians. The sections on calcium and parenteral feeding are short and rather disappointing, but overall several quarts of guidance have become an excellent pinta. It will be worth keeping a copy on each paediatric ward.

A N STANTON

Drawings from the newborn. Poems and drawings of infants in crisis. By H Spears. Pp 127: \$39.95 hardback. Ben-Simon Publications, 1986.

This is an unusual book containing 20 poems and 52 full page pencil drawings of babies done by an American artist in a neonatal intensive care unit in Copenhagen. The drawings show babies in incubators with tubes and all resuscitation equipment; the size of the children is often shown by contrast with the hands of the nurses. The drawings are competent and of variable quality with tone values much like those of the well known books of drawings by Dowd, but she has barely Dowd's facile skill. The poems are accompaniments or substitutes for drawings. The whole gives a fascinating insight into an artist's view of a situation usually only recorded by a nurse or doctor or by an involved relative. Some of the poems have beautiful passages such as 'Any kind/of life is life;/but here the event conceals all questioning/ . . . ' and ' . . . on the screen, this tiny green snake/of her life whips and whips and whips'.

This is not a happy book any more than any other book on human tragedy is, but it is a true work of art in that it will leave every reader a little more thoughtful and a little different. It is an excellent book to give to someone who has lived through an intensive care ward; I can see many neonatologists being given a copy from a 'grateful patient'.

JOHN L EMERY