

BOOK REVIEWS

The Urology of Childhood. By T. TWISTINGTON HIGGINS, D. INNES WILLIAMS and D. F. ELLISON NASH. (Pp. 286; 136 figures. 45s.) London: Butterworth and Co. Ltd. 1951.

The publication of this book is an important event in the development of surgical knowledge in this country. The cases of which it treats form a small proportion of the surgical ills affecting the population in general: their pathology is often extremely difficult to unravel; their treatment a matter of difficulty to decide. Yet among them the surgeon may find some of the most rewarding cases in the whole range of medicine; cases in which the right interpretation of symptoms and the right treatment has meant the avoidance of death or of a lifetime of misery.

Here information is given which is not to be obtained elsewhere, even at the cost of prolonged search through medical periodicals. This information is the fruit of many years of study, experience, and experiment upon the immense mass of cases which pours into The Hospital for Sick Children. There is a class of textbook excellent for its primary purpose of enabling students to pass examinations, in that all known methods of treatment are described in it, yet almost useless for guidance in any particular difficulty since there is no firm direction as to which expedients will work and which will not. This book is not of such a kind; it is confined solely to the description of what the authors have reason to think is the pathology of the conditions discussed and to the methods of treatment which they have found successful; together with accounts of particular cases illustrating general principles. There is a welcome absence of the vague oracular statement which so frequently in medical writing conceals the absence of accurate knowledge and clear thought.

An important point about this book is that it appears capable of indefinite growth. Its authors combine the authority of long experience with the fresh outlook of a younger generation, which is as it should be in surgery; and one can hope that editions will succeed each other in which the same balance will be kept. In this way a steadily accumulating but carefully sifted mass of knowledge should always be available to those who are interested. Its readers should include not only urological specialists, but all who have to do with children, whether as physicians, psychologists, or general practitioners. The latter two classes will find one of their commoner and more exasperating problems, that of enuresis, clearly analysed, and principles for its treatment set out in a most helpful way.

A criticism is that more detailed descriptions of technique and instruments might be given. The apparatus needed is so delicate and expensive, and the manipulative skill required so great, that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that work of this kind should be treated as is cerebral surgery, and concentrated in a few special centres. Finally, in a work that treats of hypospadias and hermaphroditism, it seems illogical to omit

to give guidance on a subject upon which most contradictory teaching and practice is in vogue, that of 'undescended testicle'.

Clinical Pediatric Urology. By MEREDITH CAMPBELL. (Pp. 1113; 543 figures. 90s.) London: W. B. Saunders. 1951.

Dr. Meredith Campbell's numerous contributions to the literature have already made us familiar with his encyclopaedic knowledge of children's urology, and the appearance of this book, epitomizing his long experience, is an important event for those with a special interest in this branch of surgery. His previous two-volume monograph, *Pediatric Urology*, which appeared in 1937, has been the standard work of reference on its subject: the present work, although very much more than a new edition, follows the same lines and is like its predecessor an invaluable source of information regarding the rarer disorders of the urinary tract. The incorporation of the word 'clinical' in the title has not unfortunately involved the rearrangement of the material along strictly clinical lines, and the reader may well find it hard to discover Dr. Campbell's opinion upon some of the simpler issues. Even such a clear-cut clinical entity as the pelvic hydronephrosis of childhood is discussed in no less than five separate sections according to its exact cause, which may be discoverable only at operation. Apart from the chapter on urinary infections, which should be of considerable interest to paediatricians, the book will be chiefly of value to surgeons with urological experience. There is a complete range of admirably reproduced pyelograms illustrating every topic, good cystoscopic drawings and an unusually full bibliography. Inevitably there are points upon which other urologists will differ from the author: many will doubt whether they have frequently observed 'advanced prostatitis' resulting from masturbation or whether meatotomy is invariably required for meatal ulceration, and it seems unnecessary to have included so much discussion of disorders which are exceptionally rare in children yet familiar enough in adult practice. These are of course minor points and in no way affect the importance of the book as a contribution to the literature of urology: both author and publisher are to be congratulated on its production.

An Atlas of General Affections of the Skeleton. By SIR THOMAS FAIRBANK. (Pp. 411. 55s.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone. 1951.

The high standard of medical literature which was expected to appear in Sir Thomas Fairbank's book is now before us. No one can be otherwise than delighted that our very distinguished orthopaedic surgeon has set down his great practical knowledge of the general affections of the skeleton. We shall be more than grateful for this 'information gleaned from my collection of records, a collection accumulated over a period of