

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

many years'. Few are privileged to write so authoritatively on the clinical and pathological aspects of skeletal disease.

The introductory classification of the diseases considered is a revelation of clear thinking and logical arrangement. Sir Thomas has always shown special care in the proper use of words in the nomenclature of diseases in bones and his present list should be accepted as authoritatively correct.

The scheme of presentation adds to the delight of the book, and in nearly every sentence the reader gains something from the fund of personal wisdom displayed and the clinical ideas interpolated gently but persuasively. Not only the core of the subject matter is vividly in focus, but the variations in each particular instance are brought out in an absorbing relevance.

'An Atlas of General Affections of the Skeleton' will be immediately accepted as a classic in the medical writings of paediatrics. A very large part of the book is related to congenital developmental errors and to problems of nutrition and metabolism. Each chapter is appropriately planned to contain a general discussion on a particular abnormality followed by descriptions and radiological illustrations (and sometimes photographs of the patient) of personally studied cases. Thus the reader is never in doubt of the vast experience incorporated into the book. The historical notes, often serving to introduce the particular syndrome, give further point to the author's sense of responsibility and thoroughness in making known the steps whereby the present status of knowledge has been reached. As an example of the easy power of description, Chapter 32 on renal osteo-dystrophy is recommended for study; all that is known in this extensive field is brought out by the plainest of language in no more than four pages.

The once common diseases, such as infantile rickets, are presented in a refreshingly new way, but by wise action the variety of rickets, e.g. resistant or continued rickets, and some other types of rickets which are relatively more frequently seen at the present time, are given appropriate emphasis both by word and precision in x-ray illustrations. Moreover, in many of the case histories and notes there is an abundance of therapeutic method and prognostic data. It might be fairly stated that Sir Thomas has actually written a series of chapters on the natural history of affections of the skeleton and he has not hesitated to mention, without irrelevance, suitable information on the biochemical findings and on the concurrent physiological derangements. Wherever aetiological factors are doubtful, a skilful discussion usually clears away any pre-existent fogging of ideas.

With commendable brevity the article on Fanconi's syndrome reveals Sir Thomas's great descriptive ability. It is to be noted that he has not necessarily become involved in some of the up-to-date biochemical complexities of renal tubular dysfunction, and it will be necessary to look elsewhere for these. Eosinophilic granuloma of bone is considered in close association with Hand-Schüller-Christian disease and Letterer-Siwe disease, and the radiographs on page 302 clearly show the great similarities in this group. Osseous manifestations in the lipoidoses are well presented. Spinal

lesions in Gaucher's disease are shown and some extremely interesting case records are included. Fluorosis and the osteosclerosis due to bismuth, lead and phosphorus receive adequate discussion. The skeleton in the endocrine disorders is a particularly interesting section of the book, and the chapters on pituitary, thyroid and gonadal relationships have a special paediatric interest. The important matter of bone involvement in congenital syphilis is comprehensively illustrated and the radiographs, though demonstrating a little of the common difficulty of reproduction in this particular condition, depict the variety of bone reactions so often helpful in the diagnosis. To throw it into comparative relief, the next chapter is concerned with a classical life history, in text and radiographs, of a case of infantile cortical hyperostosis which, as is usual, reached a favourable conclusion.

The index is another example of precision and completeness.

Pathology of the Fetus and the Newborn. By EDITH L. POTTER. (Pp. 574; 601 figures. 150s.) Chicago: The Year Book Publishers Inc. Distributors in Gt. Britain, Interscience Publishers Ltd. 1952.

Dr. Edith Potter has a world-wide reputation as an authority on foetal and neonatal pathology, and this remarkable book is the product of an experience of many years and many thousands of necropsies. It is the work of an author who can draw on a vast store of personal observations and need depend little on secondhand information. An adequate bibliography is given at the end of each chapter, but the text is refreshingly free from references to other people's work: it is very much a record of the author's own experience.

A large proportion of the book is taken up by the description and illustration of malformations. This is done so thoroughly that there can be few developmental anomalies not mentioned, and the pictures provide a gallery of malformations the like of which has probably not been seen before. Errors of development bulk much larger in the book than in the actual practice of foetal and neonatal pathology, but the diseases and injuries that occur during this period of life, and various general aspects of the subject, are not neglected. There are chapters on anoxia, birth trauma, infections, tumours, prematurity, placental pathology and other subjects, as well as references to diseases of the various systems and organs in their appropriate chapters.

A few minor errors have crept in, e.g. the description of the pneumococcus as a Gram-negative diplococcus, and the use of the term 'pyloric sphincter' where the wall of the pyloric canal is meant. In megacolon, Auerbach's plexus is deficient in the unhyertrophied distal segment, not in the hypertrophied portion as stated. The statement that subdural haemorrhage is uncommon is contrary to general experience, and there is some confusion about the source of subdural bleeding, which on p. 90 is said to be most commonly the middle meningeal artery and on p. 405 the middle cerebral artery—both surprising statements.

The publishers' part in the production of the book is a great achievement. The type is clear and well-spaced;