

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Pediatric Gynecology**, 4th ed. By GOODRICH C. SCHAUFFLER. (Pp. 349; 84 figures. 57s.) London: Interscience Publishers. Chicago: Year Book Publishers. 1958.

The fourth edition of this useful book has been slightly enlarged and contains many fresh illustrations. A seven-page section on female pseudohermaphroditism has been added and 'masturbation is, at last, given a monographic consideration'; no less than 17 pages! Here and there the author seems, perhaps, unduly concerned over the upbringing and *mores* of the American teenager, and his ideas on such going's-on as teenage pregnancy, masturbation, female circumcision and even clitoridectomy in that surprising country leave the (English) reviewer confused and somewhat breathless. The section, however, on the truly pathological disorders of the female child's genital and urinary systems are straightforward, clearly if wordily expressed and useful, and the appropriate aspects of endocrinology, chemo- and antibiotic therapy and treatment with steroids are all clear and up to date.

The subject is certainly worth a book to itself and this volume more than adequately fulfils its purposes.

**The Compleat Pediatrician**. By W. C. DAVISON and JEANA DAVISON LEVINTHAL. (Pp. vi + 257. 35s.) London: Staples Press. 1958.

The fact that seven editions have been published in America is evidence of the popularity of this book in its land of origin. Further editions have been or are in process of being published in Japan, Spain and Italy. An English edition has been considered essential and *The Compleat Pediatrician* is now published for the first time in Great Britain. The reviewer is uncertain as to what exactly is implied by the use of the term 'English edition'. The spelling employed in the title shows no departure from American practice.

There is none who can but admire the immense industry devoted to bringing this book up to date without sacrifice of its unique character. It is small wonder that Professor Davison has felt the need for assistance and he is to be congratulated on enlisting the services of his daughter, herself a paediatrician, as co-author. The original format of the book has been retained. Those conversant with earlier editions will find no difficulty in recognizing amendments and additions made in the light of recent advances in modern paediatrics. Greater use is made of practical footnotes than formerly. This is to be commended as is the introduction of a few carefully selected references.

There can be no questioning the value of this book if judiciously used as a discriminating guide to the collection of clinical facts relevant to the individual case. The volume is not to be regarded as a short cut to diagnosis

or treatment. On the contrary it is an aid to memory and thoroughness. As the authors themselves emphasize, training and experience are essential to reliable evaluation of clinical facts no matter how meticulously amassed. Recognition of this fact is essential if the maximum help is to be derived from this admirable publication.

**The Management of Childhood Asthma**. By FREDERIC SPEER. (Pp. xii + 116; 13 figures. 36s.) London: Blackwell Scientific Publications; Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1958.

Any doctor, except an allergist, will read this primer with mounting impatience at the lopsided view given of children with asthma. Calm will return when he realizes that the book deals with the treatment of childhood asthma and not of asthmatic children, and that the text concerns only asthma due to specific allergens in the United States. Within these boundaries here is an excellent account of history taking, skin testing, elimination diets for food allergens, orthodox drug treatment and hyposensitization methods.

Of 315 cases studied in the mould and pollen laden atmosphere of Kansas City and its environs the recorded sensitivities were to alternaria (67.6%), ragweed (42.9%), housedust (38.1%), helminthosporium (22.5%) and grass (17.8%). All the rest rate low (cat, 4.1%; dog, 2.2%). Between the lines Dr. Speer reveals himself as a shrewd and doubtless highly effective physician, with more in his management than pure allergy, but as director of a paediatric allergy clinic he has to be loyal to the unitarian view that asthma is always due to specific allergens if we are clever enough to find them. He recognizes (and treats) 'unusual psychic stress' as a contributing factor. From the only alternative conception mentioned, that of a psychogenic origin, he dissents like most physicians and most psychiatrists. How sad that asthma and allergy clinics have to nail some special colour to the mast. The truth could be that asthma is a symptom and not a disease *sui generis* and that each case has to be studied afresh and in the broadest possible terms, although a few are purely allergic and a few neurotic. Dr. Speer recognizes that there may be widespread symptoms even outside the respiratory tract, but these are 'evidence of systemic allergy'. We close the book hearing a faint echo of the Preacher: 'Allergy, allergy, all is allergy'.

**Technique Chirurgicale Infantile**. By BERNARD DUHAMEL in collaboration with SIMONE SEGAX. (Pp. 354; 289 figures. Fr. fr. 2,800.) Paris: Masson. 1957.

This book makes interesting reading because it is the work of a thoughtful surgeon with an original mind. He gives reasons for his preferred methods, and the