

BOOK REVIEWS

Pediatric Dermatology. By HENRY H. PERLMAN. (Pp. xii + 477; 203 figs. \$18.00; 135s.) Chicago: The Year Book Publishers Inc. British distributors: Interscience Publishers Ltd.

Dr. Perlman, who is Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Jefferson Medical College and Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, is to be commended for his courage and industry in writing a textbook on dermatology. While he writes primarily for paediatricians, general practitioners and students, many dermatologists would find the book a useful addition to their bookshelves, for good books upon paediatric dermatology are rare. The latter would find added interest in a work based upon the principles of paediatric medicine, with a secondary approach to dermatology. The author's wide experience in two specialties and in pharmacology gives him an unusual breadth of approach which is reflected in the excellent chapters on physical examination and history-taking that few of us can hope to emulate. His wisdom in advocating the simpler and well tried remedies is a fresh current of common sense throughout the chapters on treatment and topical remedies.

There follows some thought provoking observations on the skin hygiene of the newly-born and only aesthetic objections can be raised against the idea of leaving more to nature and not approaching godliness via soap and water unless the infant has a normal skin.

Inevitably an experienced dermatologist can find a few weak spots as critical reviewers find in our own writings. We found some confusion in the account of subcutaneous induration of the new born. Whilst a low olein content of the subcutaneous fat may lead to the formation of fatty crystals of a higher melting point and a granulomatous reaction to their presence, which we regard as the specific basis of sclerema neonatorum, subcutaneous fat necrosis in infants or adults is not related to the olein content and has a banal histology. Dr. A. M. H. Gray deserved a reference here.

No mention is made of agammaglobulinaemia which has been recorded in cases of dermatitis gangraenosa and probably accounts for the infant's grave susceptibility to infection. Injections of gamma globulin may be life saving in some cases.

Although the old and little used arsenical medication is included in the treatment of dermatitis herpetiformis, the more effective drug diamino-diphenylsulphone is omitted from the schedule of treatment. A better name for granuloma pyogenicum is granuloma telangiectaticum, for whereas the abundance of vascular tissue is obvious, the pyogenic factor can rarely be demonstrated.

It is stated that aphthous stomatitis is caused by the herpes virus. Harvey Blank and others have failed to confirm this aetiology.

Surely too much stress is put upon the treatment of strawberry marks and cavernous haemangiomas, most of which may more safely be left for the usual spontaneous resolution.

Lest we damn, by faint praise, in finding minor points of disagreement, which may be controversial in any case, let us add that this is a good book; the standard of printing, illustrations and binding is of the highest. It is almost pure American with perhaps too few references to the outside world literature. However, the standard of dermatological knowledge and progress is probably the highest in the U.S.A., and it merely remains to one who has suffered the pangs of book-birth to congratulate the author.

Notes on Infant Feeding. By STANLEY GRAHAM and ROBERT A. SHANKS. (Pp. 76. 4s. 6d.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone Ltd. 1960.

A hearty welcome can be given to another edition of this little book at the very reasonable price of 4s. 6d. It contains much useful advice and information which is concisely given and it can be recommended equally to the student and young doctor. Some of it seems a little old-fashioned and the Sassenach baby, for instance, nowadays seems to double his weight well before the six months the authors allow.

Pathology of Infancy and Childhood. By AGNES R. MACGREGOR. (Pp. 631; 388 figs. 75s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1960.

Agnes Macgregor of international renown is one of the foremost pioneers of paediatric pathology. Her colleagues in the United Kingdom especially owe much to her influence and this book places them further in her debt. As she says in the preface it is not intended primarily for those familiar with the subject but for those pathologists who deal only occasionally with paediatric problems. As such it fills a long-felt gap in the literature.

About one third is taken up with the perinatal period and congenital malformations. The remainder is devoted to the infective, degenerative, metabolic and neoplastic diseases which occur in later infancy and childhood. There are also short but extremely valuable chapters on blood diseases, accidental injuries and poisons.

Most of these subjects are dealt with inadequately in general pathological texts, but here they are given their proper emphasis. For this reason paediatricians and paediatric surgeons will find this an extremely useful book. The pathological aspects of almost all their clinical problems are described in one volume of convenient size.

Of particular interest to the occasional paediatric pathologist are the observations on sudden unexpected