work of others. There follows a group of paediatric contributions; the first, partly speculative, on
the prophylaxis of allergic disease in infancy and childhood
and then a useful paper on pollinosis. There are two
lengthy chapters by dedicated paediatric allergists on
food-induced allergies and gastro-intestinal allergy, a
valuable chapter on steroid therapy, and a short chapter—
the most succinct in the book by William P. Buffum—on
asthma in infancy.

The rest of the book—nearly half—contains further contributions by psychiatrists and psychologists.
Abramson introduces and develops his valuable concept of
parental engulfment as the basic emotional problem in
asthma, and he contrasts it with the psychoanalytic
theory of maternal rejection propounded by French and
Alexander some 20 years ago. He maintains that the
rejection theory does not fully explain all the phenomena
—especially that of remission of asthma following
'parentectomy'. He also finds his own concept much
more acceptable to parents and, therefore, useful in
therapy. There is no doubt that it approximates to the
idea of the asthmatic's predicament held by many
clinicians in this country.

There follows a fascinating account by L. Bernstein
and others of the organization and functions of the psycho-
logical services at the Jewish National Home for Asthmatic
Children. This Home for 150 children with intractable
asthma (that is asthma that has not yielded to any other
treatment) is based on the idea of parentectomy. The
diagnostic and therapeutic approach is multi-disciplinary.
The training and research programmes are impressive.
The money needed to finance this gigantic scheme is any
one's guess; but this is surely the kind of work that must
be done if solid progress is to be made in such a difficult
field.

Among the other few chapters, there is one of special
interest by M. Murray Peshkin and H. A. Abramson on
group therapy in New York with the parents of children
in residence in Denver, 2,000 miles away. This gives
much insight into what happens with parents when their
children are removed from them and what happens when
they return some two years later.

This book should be welcomed by paediatricians and
child psychiatrists who have a special interest in allergic
disease as a truly psychosomatic problem. That is not to
say, however, that it is altogether comfortable reading.
The papers are variable in quality and they sometimes
overlap in content. More detail is given about allergy
than is easily assimilable by the average psychiatrist.
Asthma, and to a less extent eczema, are most ably dealt
with, and the result is impressive. But the gastro-
intestinal and other allergies have received too little
attention from psychiatrists to set against the detailed
work done and theories propounded by immunologists.
Some may regret that Abramson has called his parental
engulfment theory 'The Cronus Complex'. It is a pity
that Oedipal rivalry should lead us further into Greek
mythology when our own language can serve so well to
express what is meant!

A very full bibliography follows each chapter, but there
is no index. Thus, there is a useful chapter on steroid
therapy and steroid dependence; but many valuable
references to this subject elsewhere can only be found by
thumbing through the book.

None the less this book is to be highly recommended to
all who are interested in the subject, and Ernest Harms
has earned our thanks for this first volume of a series
designed to present a multi-disciplinary approach in
subjects where this is so clearly needed.

Acute Hemiplegia in Childhood. A Report of a Study
Group Held at Clevendon April 20-22, 1961. Little Club
Clinics in Developmental medicine No. 6.) Edited by
MARTIN BAX and ROSS MITCHELL. (Pp. 120; illustrated. 17s. 6d.)
London: National Spastics Society (Medical Education and
Information Unit) in association with William Heinemann Medical Books,

This, the sixth of the enterprising Little Club Clinics
in Developmental Medicine, is the report of a small group of
paediatricians, neurologists and pathologists who met to
discuss all aspects of acute hemiplegia in childhood.
There are 14 original papers, and the discussions, which
presumably followed each, are condensed and grouped
together at the end of the volume. There seem to have
been no wild disagreements amongst the participants.
The dangers of early carotid angiography are allowed to
be small compared with its diagnostic benefits, but what
the benefits of exact diagnosis are is unclear.

Dehydration, anticoagulants and hypothermia are fully
discussed, but no one of the participants seems to be
certain of the circumstances in which any one of these
forms of treatment should be used.

Nevertheless the book which contains about 200
references is a useful summary of our present state of
ignorance on this baffling subject.

Living with Epileptic Seizures. By SAMUEL LIVINGSTON.
Assisted by IRVING M. PRUCE. (Pp. xix + 348; 11
figures + 21 tables. $6.50) Springfield, Illinois:

'The primary purpose of this book' says the author 'is
to present pertinent information relative to epilepsy to
non-medical persons such as patients and/or their parents,
educators and counsellors (sic), as well as to the medical
profession.' For the tautological 'pertinent' one should
perhaps read 'suitable'; and it is suitable for the recipient
of an anti-convulsant drug to know that there are 33
possible outward reactions? The author disarms the
writer by stating his belief that the epileptic patient should
know as much as possible about the various therapeutic
agents and of the recent advances made in the treatment
of epilepsy, and by implicitly condemning the practice of
concealment. While the reviewer is in general sympathy
with this attitude, he cannot help feeling that 'the truth
and nothing but the truth, but not necessarily the whole
truth' is a useful maxim in doctor-patient relations.

In fact this is a thoroughly useful textbook for the
doctor covering all aspects of the epileptics' aetiology
including heredity, diagnosis, electroencephalography, precipitating factors, general management, drug, dietary and surgical treatment, intellectual and behavioural disturbances, socio-economic and legal consequences (it is a crime for epileptics to marry in some of the United States) and so on. It is written by an expert with 26 years' experience who has made an 'intimate' follow-up study of about 15,000 patients. One thing is clear; if the book is read by only a small proportion of epileptic patients in the U.S.A. it will have to be bought by almost every American doctor.

It is also hardly justifiable, at our present state of knowledge or rather ignorance, to recommend prolonged administration of spasmyloptic or sympathomimetic drugs as curative measures in enuresis.

Interesting is Stute's view that autism is an entity separate from the general pattern of childhood schizophrenia, and which he regards as a 'constitutional abnormality of the child personality but not as a disease process.' His contribution on psychoses in childhood provides, to the uninitiated, a useful outline of the clinical pictures involved, as do the case notes of 'a psychiatrist in a children's hospital' by Gertrude Sauter.

Hardly any attention is paid to the large borderland between paediatrics and child psychiatry, namely the psychosomatic disorders in childhood, where close co-operation between paediatrician and child psychiatrist is likely to be most fruitful.

This little volume is a brave venture but not a very successful one.


This monograph is a readable and clear account of the histopathological findings in 98 children who died either suddenly or unexpectedly after an apparently mild illness of not more than 48 hours. Perinatal deaths are not included. The author confirms the findings of several recent investigators that clinically unimpressive infections of the respiratory tract account for well over half of all these deaths. The observation that there is a marked November to April peak, and that infants under 6 months are the most frequent victims, is confirmed. Nutritional and socio-economic factors appear to be of little significance, whereas lack of maternal experience (mothers aged less than 25 years) was found to be important in the statistical evaluation of the case material.

Cellular changes in the lymphoid tissues, both in the children studied and in experimental animals, lead the author to postulate virus infections as being largely responsible for these deaths. Acute adrenocortical failure, the result of 'stress', is thought to be important. The author confirms that, following a 'stress' situation, a profound and rapid electrolyte disturbance can occur. This in turn is thought to be responsible for the almost constant finding of gross cerebral oedema—the actual cause of death.

Not unexpectedly the mechanics and dynamics of 'stress' are no more clear now than in the days of Selye. The causation of the fatal cerebral oedema also remains more or less a mystery.

The book is well produced on glossy paper and the photomicrographs, both black and white and coloured, are good. There is a truly impressive and commendably international bibliography. Though the author is perhaps a little too concerned with the semantics of 'sudden' as opposed to 'unexpected' death, the book deserves to be widely read.