diagrams. A very limited bibliography of general articles and of larger books of reference is provided, but the reader’s attention is unfortunately not directed to these at appropriate places in the text.

The sections on treatment are particularly well written and the houseman will find a store of sound practical advice on the management of his patients suffering from a wide variety of water and electrolyte disturbances. The author, wisely, does not advance cut-and-dried rules on treatment, but rather endeavours to guide the reader through explanation of the physiological derangements. The book would be benefited by inclusion, in an appendix, of a table of normal ranges and means for body fluid volumes and concentrations of plasma electrolytes.

For the general reader, whether medical student or physician grown rusty, the book can be recommended for its clarity. However, the introductory chapter could well have been expanded to include an account of the distribution within the body of the important electrolytes and of homeostatic mechanisms concerned in the regulation of water and electrolyte balance. The reader interested in recent developments in this field will be disappointed by the absence of references to important new advances: thus, though potassium chloride is quite rightly advocated as the potassium preparation of choice for the treatment of potassium depletion, no mention is made of the frequent dependence of potassium repletion on the concurrent administration of chloride, and the uselessness of other potassium salts, such as bicarbonate and citrate. The approach to the problem of the oedematous states is undertaken in a true spirit of humility for present ignorance, but it is a pity that the place of aldosterone in renal sodium and water retention is stressed to the exclusion of other mechanisms which are now under intensive study. This deficiency is offset by some most sensible comments to follow on the use of diuretics.

In conclusion, it may be said that this book provides a sound addition to the library of the generally interested physician or surgeon.


This is the German edition of the now classic French work ‘Problèmes Actuels de Nephrologie Infantile’. It is, however, more than just a straightforward translation from the original. The chapters have been rearranged in a more logical manner. For example, the various forms of glomerulonephritis are considered in consecutive chapters and the nephrotic syndrome is described in detail in one large section. By contrast, the thrombotic microangiopathies now rate a chapter to themselves. Other subjects such as rickets, hypercalciuria, and idiopathic renal acidosis follow the original format more closely but may not appear in exactly the same text order. The number of illustrations, which are again of very high quality, has been increased, and new photomicrographs of histological preparations appear in the illustrated section at the end of the volume. Not unnaturally the bibliography has been increased to include a number of references to German work in the field of renal disease, and the large section on the treatment of renal disorders has been slanted towards acceptable German practice.

This German volume is much more pleasant to handle than its French predecessor. The binding is excellent and the quality of the paper is much improved. The general lay-out has been cleverly altered so that in spite of additions to the text the number of pages has been reduced by 30.

This work has achieved considerable success in the French and Spanish editions. The German one will undoubtedly do likewise.


There is no shortage of explanations for nocturnal enuresis. The doctor can take his choice from among: acid urine or excess urine, bladder anomaly or irritability, deep sleep or sleeping on the back, too early or too late pot-training, psychological or family disturbances, low social class or low spina bifida, genetic transmission and delayed maturation (but of what?). Case records and even statistical evidence may be adduced, and the theories may be bolstered by a wide variety of claimed cures resulting after an even wider variety of treatments.

In this small book the author, after an epidemiological survey, reviews objectively most of the reputed causes. ‘In such a widespread disorder’, he sensibly remarks, ‘it is undoubtedly a mistake to seek to establish a constant, single cause.’ With any form of treatment the factor of suggestion is admittedly important, and one sympathizes with the statement that, ‘Evaluating the results of drug therapy is more difficult than any other form of treatment: the results are often unintelligible, if not absurd.’

The author considers that the most important factors in nocturnal enuresis are polyuria and hypersomnia, though he admits that these are by no means constant, and they are not accepted by all observers. He postulates a phasic inversion of antiuretic hormone secretion in nocturnal enuresis (even though it is not possible to measure lowering of the level of antiuretic hormone). Although the antiuretic effect of vasopressin, used as a form of replacement therapy, seemed inexplicably to be maintained for some hours after all the drug must have been excreted, he reports improvement in some severe and otherwise intractable cases.


This book is a collection of papers given at a symposium on bile pigment metabolism held at the Royal
Free Hospital, London, in July 1966. 50 people from 12 countries participated, including acknowledged international authorities. The standard of papers is high and the production in book form by Blackwell is, of course, excellent.

The material is presented in five sections. (1) Origin of bile pigments (6 papers). (2) Structure of bile pigments (10 papers). (3) Hepatic transport of bile pigments (7 papers). (4) Bilirubin metabolism in obstructive jaundice (3 papers). (5) Renal excretion of bile pigments (7 papers). (6) A final section deals with the histochemical demonstration of bilirubin and its conjugates in tissue.

Topics discussed include ‘early bilirubin’; haemolysis and bilirubin production; the chemistry of bile pigments; protein binding; hepatic uptake and transport; and excretion in bile and urine. The kinetics of bilirubin distribution in the body and alternate pathways of excretion in complete biliary obstruction are considered.

The excretion of urobilinogen is dealt with in one paper.

The standard of papers varies, and inevitably there is much repetition of data. References to published works are given at the end of each paper. Even though they are seldom complete, repetition often occurs. A single section giving detailed references, including titles, would have been better.

It is not clear to whom this book is directed. Certainly it will be of great interest to the participants, but other workers in this specialist field will probably prefer to read in full the original articles from which these papers are drawn. From the clinician’s point of view, though there is much of interest, this is not easily accessible in the mass of information, much of which concerns animal experimentation.

In short, a better edited and integrated account would have been of value to clinicians, whereas the data presented are not in sufficient detail for the research worker already engaged in this field.


This slim volume is indeed expensive, and not particularly informative. It is concerned mainly with the well-known reticuloendothelial disorders such as eosinophilic granuloma of bone, Hand-Schuller-Christian disease, and Letterer-Siwe disease, but also includes a short section on xanthoma, Gaucher’s disease, and Nieman-Pick disease. There is a brief introduction on the general aspects of these disorders and their classification. This section is naive and does not elucidate the various concepts concerning the function of the reticuloendothelial system in immune disorders.

The various forms of reticuloendothelial disease are then described briefly, though if Nieman-Pick and Gaucher’s disease are to be included there is little to justify omission of other lipidoses. A clinical review of 64 cases of true reticuloendotheliosis is followed by a short section on treatment, and the monograph concludes with a recapitulation of the author’s views. There is a short bibliography arranged under subject headings. The author admits to having pruned the references to a minimum, but it is a pity that very few up-to-date ones have been included. Most of the classical papers are mentioned. The book is well produced and the illustrations are clear and to the point.

The subject is a difficult one and many diagnostic problems exist among the various disorders included in this book. It appears unlikely, however, that the clinician would gain much insight from reading this work, and it will be of little interest to the research worker. It is said to have been produced with the clinician and student in mind, but both would receive just as adequate information from one of the better standard paediatric textbooks.


This is a well-written, informative, and beautifully illustrated textbook of some 333 pages covering an immensely important part of medicine. It is divided into six sections—embryology, anatomy and physiology, abnormalities, infections, and rare tumours, and endocrine disorders, and has an extensive bibliography as well. The first two sections are short but contain the important foundations for the sections to follow. All the commoner developmental abnormalities are dealt with especially with regard to surgical treatment. The part dealing with endocrine disorders is very largely concerned with the commoner disorders of sexual development and describes clearly their particular chromosomal patterns, endocrine findings, and clinical features. If any one section merits especial acclaim it is this, not only for the completeness of its coverage but also because it makes a difficult subject understandable. This book can be thoroughly recommended to the undergraduate to provide him with important information, and also to the postgraduate as a reference in the management of problems, some of which may be met only rarely.


This volume is the last in the series of Colloquia on Endocrinology by the Ciba Foundation. Like the previous ones, it represents a series of papers presented at a meeting with an invited audience of experts. Each paper is followed by discussion and a general discussion concludes the book. This book is essentially for the expert, and contains up-to-date information in many specialized spheres of normal and abnormal testicular embryology, histology, steroid biosynthesis, etc. The clinical endocrinologist may feel disappointed that so little space is devoted to the problems of diagnosis and