

Book Reviews

Paediatric Urology. Edited by D. Innes Williams. (Pp. x + 585; illustrated. 170s.) London: Butterworths. 1968.

Probably most paediatricians would regard the urologist as the most indispensable of any of his colleagues, so many, so varied, and so difficult are the urological problems encountered in young children. Only in recent years have the full resources of urological diagnosis been concentrated on these problems, and it is only now that we are beginning to gain some proper long-term information about them.

This book is written in the main by four paediatric urological surgeons (D. Innes Williams and H. B. Eckstein from Great Ormond Street, J. E. S. Scott from Newcastle, and J. H. Johnston from Liverpool), so that the emphasis is surgical. Medical aspects are covered by D. N. S. Kerr of Newcastle, D. G. Cottom, and G. H. Newns of Great Ormond Street, with a chapter on radiological investigation by D. R. Chrispin of Great Ormond Street.

The traditional dogmatism of surgeons is noticeably absent, and the many important issues where existing facts are insufficient to allow any firm conclusion are in general well handled. The chapter on undescended testicle by Johnston, for instance, exemplifies this judicial approach, and gives additional little-known facts, such as, that even in unilateral maldescent fertility tends to be low. The surgical contributions also reflect in a refreshing way the experiences of their authors who are prepared to state their personal views rather than merely reiterate prevailing opinions. Thus Scott devoted a chapter to a critical review of the concept of 'bladder outflow obstruction' and, concludes that unless there is unequivocal evidence of mechanical (as opposed to 'functional') obstruction, operations on the bladder neck are unjustified.

On the other hand, some of the medical sections seem more lacking in these desirable qualities. One wonders, for instance, whether the description of acute nephritis reflects the personal experiences of the author (Kerr), or merely repeats traditional views. Thus, acute *post-streptococcal* nephritis, which probably has a mean 100% recovery rate rather than the '80% + ' quoted (in Fig. 17), is not clearly differentiated from the *non-streptococcal* group which, at least in this country, seems to provide most of the cases of acute nephritis that fail to recover.

Here and there, inevitably, one notes statements which are debatable: that *all* cases of acute urinary infection require complete (i.e. radiological) investigation; that chemotherapy for any urinary infection should be continued for 6 months; that acute nephritis should be treated with penicillin whether or not streptococci are present in a throat swab; and that the retractable

testicle 'can be readily' manipulated into the scrotum.

Over-all this is an excellent book, and the best text on the subject available. Production and illustrations are adequate, but it is a pity that the value of references is impaired by not providing their titles.

Encyclopedia of Urology. Vol. VII/I Malformations. Edited by C. E. ALKEN, V. W. DIX, W. E. GOODWIN, H. W. WEYRANCH, and E. WILDBOLZ. (Pp. xiii + 479; 348 figures + tables. DM.196; \$49.00.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1968.

This well-produced volume is one of 23 which comprise the 'Encyclopedia of Urology'. Though much of the information has been included in Volume XV, 'Urology in Childhood' (1958), the multiple authorship has enhanced this later work, which is complete in itself and up to date.

Twelve American authors have written the 10 chapters of this excellent book. In the opening pages on vesicoureteral reflux, J. A. Hutch and A. D. Amar clearly describe the anatomical and physiological principles involved. Later these two authors give an account of the anomalies of the ureter, including their diagnosis and management, and F. Farman's contribution on the anomalies of the kidney concludes with a useful bibliography of 11 pages. There are two chapters on bladder abnormalities, one by V. F. Marshall and E. C. Muecke which includes the development of the bladder and the features and treatment of vesical defects; in the other chapter, on anomalies of the bladder neck, J. J. Murphy and T. A. Tristan illustrate their experience of cinefluorographic voiding cystourethrography with numerous 'shots'. The sixth chapter by K. Waterhouse is concerned with urethral anomalies, and deals with the problem of urethral valves. Next, R. J. Prentis describes his method of treatment of undescended testicle based on the shortest distance principle; the inclusion of the clinical and functional results would have enhanced this expert study.

Next, O. S. Culp and J. W. McRoberts fully review the many procedures for the treatment of hypospadias and contribute their experience of construction of 'more than 70 linear feet of new water tight urethra' in the past 15 years. The concluding two chapters by H. W. James on the anomalies of the female genitalia and the intersex state are both excellent contributions. The latter consisting of 80 pages fully deals with the problem of sex identification and the varieties of hermaphroditism. Each chapter is well illustrated by photographs and line drawings which clearly show the clinical state and the various operative procedures.

Thus, in this volume, most of the genito-urinary

malformations, both common and rare, are included, but ano-rectal defects with associated urological disorders are omitted, as are vertebral defects in relation to the formation and function of the urinary tract. Embryology and descriptions of operations are included in some of the chapters, but many of the writers have referred the reader to other volumes of the encyclopedia for details.

This book will be welcomed by all urologists, paediatric and plastic surgeons, and gynaecologists.

The Biologic Basis of Paediatric Practice. Edited by ROBERT E. COOKE. Associate editor SIDNEY LEVIN. (Pp. xxi + 1815; illustrated + tables. 228s.) London, New York, Toronto, Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Co., The Blakiston Division. 1968.

This gigantic volume with 1739 pages of text and 76 of index, an editorial board of 13, with 163 contributors, and weighing and costing more than ten pounds, defies serious reviewing. Certainly it covers the biological and physiological mechanisms involved in paediatric symptomatology, pathology, and clinical investigations, competently and comprehensively, and indeed, many of the chapters are masterly expositions of their subject. Certainly also, much of the text can, only by stretching the use of words, be said to have immediate relevance to the title.

Briefly, Part I, a mere 95 pages, entitled 'Sciences Fundamental to the Understanding of Growth and Maturation', has 5 chapters; 'The Cell', with some beautiful electronmicroscopy pictures, 'Hereditry', well dealt with in 10 all too brief pages, and 3 with the grandiose titles, 'Intelligence', 'The Biopsychology of Social Behaviour in Animals', and 'The Social Biology of Human Beings', each needing a volume of its own, polished off in 50 pages.

Part II, the real core of the book, occupying 1200 pages, is, with some inevitable overlapping, brilliant; though here and there the bombastic American wording almost defies translation into the English language.

And then Part III, 'The Total Child': indeed the whole of him, including a host of aspects relevant and irrelevant. 'Genetics' and 'Cytogenetics', both excellent, might well have been included in Part I, while the chapters on 'The Battered Baby Syndrome', 'Adoption', 'Paediatric Jurisprudence', 'Sex Education', and 'Athletics', might surely have been left to a straight paediatric textbook.

It seems a pity to have to cavil at such superabundance, but unavoidably the feeling is engendered that a less permissive Editorial Board, and a smaller group of more disciplined contributors would have given us a book of more manageable proportions. As it is, the seeker with strong arms, able to reach it down from his stoutest shelf, will, more often than not, be rewarded by finding in these pages what he wants to know.

Virus Etiology of Congenital Malformations.

May 19-20, 1967. (Pp. vi + 178; 31 figures. 65 cents.) Bethesda, U.S.A.: U.S. Dept. of

Health, Education and Welfare, National Institutes of Health. (Further copies from DR. SHEILA MITCHELL, National Heart Institute, Building 31, Room 5A52, Bethesda, Maryland 20014, U.S.A.)

This is a small paperback volume which contains the edited transcript of the proceedings of a conference held in Bethesda, Maryland in May 1967, under the auspices of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Heart Institute with the object of discussing the viral mechanisms of congenital malformations from the points of view of different disciplines.

There were 12 participants under the chairmanship of Dr. Kurt Benirschke, with 7 visitors, and as a result the meeting was informal. The topics discussed are arranged under 12 headings, each having a short introduction.

The subjects covered include the results to date in the Perinatal Research Study begun by the N.I.H. in 1959 (L. R. White), the immunological response of the fetus (A. M. Silverstein), the functions of the placenta (J. Dancis), and virus infections of it (K. Benirschke), and epidemiological approaches to aetiological problems (R. W. Miller).

There is a good deal of information hidden away in the conversational sections, perhaps more than in the short introductions, but it is difficult to find as there is no subject index. No doubt a verbatim record is valuable and can be stimulating, but it does not make for easy reading when presented in such a literal transcript, which would have been greatly improved if the editor could have discarded the conversational trivia.

Experimental Thymectomy. Possibilities and Limitations. By MAX W. HESS. (Pp. viii + 105; 7 figures + 10 tables. DM. 38. \$9.50.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1968.

There has been an enormous amount of talk and writing about the thymus, much of it oversimplified and partisan. Paediatricians have been rightly involved (not always wisely, as is instanced by the unhappy concept of status lymphaticus) because the thymus is large in early life, and looks important. The clear demonstration of a role in development of specific immunity mechanism has cleared the air, but extrapolations to clinical situations have been uncritical, and the relevance of the enormous differences in different species has not always been appreciated.

Therefore, even if it is yet another of many, this critical review, which stresses the evidence in favour of divergent views, without coming to ill-founded generalized conclusions, is welcome. It is a valuable, up-to-date source of references (many from 1967), sufficiently selective that the bibliography is not too big, without any serious omissions which I noted, even if a few selections on the edge of the field seem eccentric. The English style, though not perfectly idiomatic, is readable, and a remarkable achievement for one writing in a foreign language (there is no mention that this is a translation). Only the title seems odd—the book deals with the role of the thymus in immunity, and is by