

## Book Reviews

**Modern Trends in Paediatrics.—3.** Edited by JOHN APLEY. (Pp. x + 347; figures + tables. £4.20.) London: Butterworth. 1970.

The title 'Modern Trends' suggests that the reader can expect something more than a refresher course of good up-to-date reviews, and in this book he gets more. Some of the papers are, indeed, straightforward and very good reviews—for example, Professor Charlotte Anderson on malabsorption and Dr. Komrower on screening for metabolic errors. Three other especially successful chapters are Dr. Ronald Finn's on the prevention of Rhesus haemolytic disease, which must be one of the clearest accounts available of the less obvious facts about the pathogenesis of this disease; Dr. H. E. M. Kay's on chemotherapy of malignant disease, which, because it looks at fundamental principles as well as current practice, will not be made obsolete in another year by further advances; and Dr. Brian Wharton's on child health and nutrition—for the well-judged and readable way in which he leads one through a vast literature. However, two of the best chapters are not so much reviews as brilliant expositions of hypotheses—Professor E. Z. Saling on the oxygen-conserving adaptation of the fetal circulation and Dr. C. O. Ounsted on the autistic and hyperkinetic syndromes. Both offer ideas that are stimulating, clearly expressed, intellectually satisfying, and amenable to empirical testing. What more could one ask in a book on 'Modern Trends'? Does this book give a fair picture of the current movements in paediatrics? It is a little surprising to find only one chapter—on surgery—specifically devoted to the newborn baby, though of course he is mentioned in other chapters. On the other hand it seems entirely right that the first three chapters should be concerned with the fetus. The modern trend towards a more socially outward-looking paediatrics is reflected in Dr. Ronald MacKeith's admirable chapter on the needs of the handicapped child.

This is a book for the paediatrician to read and keep.

**Clinical Paediatric Surgery, Diagnosis and Management.** By the Staff of the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. Edited by PETER G. JONES. (Pp. 511; illustrated. £6.00.) Bristol: John Wright and Sons. 1970.

The increasing range and improvement in the results of surgical treatment in childhood and especially in the neonatal period make adequate instruction in paediatric surgery more than ever an essential part of the medical students' curriculum. However, there are still many medical books where little time is spared for this, and for the students and graduates of such institutions this book will provide an excellent substitute. There are

68 chapters and 7 appendices on a wide variety of subjects such as vomiting in the first month of life, infections, constipation, and its sequelae, or posture and gait; other aspects are dealt with on a regional or organ basis.

The emphasis is on symptoms, signs, diagnosis, when treatment is usually needed, and enough about it to provide a reasonable understanding of its nature and risks. The layout is attractive at first sight but there is perhaps too much variety of type. There are good cross-references between the sections, and a list of recommended reading at the end of each chapter.

It contains an immense amount of information, almost certainly more than is necessary for the undergraduate, but one can imagine it being used by his teacher for a quick refresher before a clinic. There are many good diagrams but it might have been better to label them differently.

This book can be strongly recommended to senior medical students, recent graduates, and paediatricians, for it has much in it of value to them all, but it seems a pity that it should have to be so expensively, if beautifully, produced. There are probably few students who can afford £6 for a book about what many of them, and their teachers, still regard as a small-print subject, and one wonders whether the publishers would consider a less costly edition next time.

**Educational Medicine.** By F. E. JAMES. (Pp. 185; figures + tables. £1.25.) London: William Heinemann. 1970.

This book was written 'to provide an elementary textbook on the technical aspects' of educational medicine for doctors entering the school health service. One-third of the book is given to a clinically-oriented discussion about medical examinations of schoolchildren in general, and about vision, hearing, and speech in particular. There follow shorter chapters on children with other educational handicaps: the maladjusted, educationally subnormal, physically handicapped, delicate, and epileptic. Brief reference is made to ascertainment, assessment, and special educational treatment of handicapped pupils and the book concludes with chapters on developmental paediatrics, reading difficulties, infections in schoolchildren and health education.

There is indeed a dearth of concise textbooks which can be recommended to doctors who want to practise school medicine, but *Educational Medicine* is hardly going to remedy this. The treatment of some subjects is too superficial to be of practical use, while that of others takes too much for granted. For example, it was felt unnecessary to describe the various types of accommodation and special apparatus available to

handicapped children: 'Anyone accustomed to schools for the deaf . . . will readily appreciate the point' (p. 64). But the doctor taking up educational medicine is not so accustomed; nor is he familiar enough with the developmental and educational needs of handicapped children to evaluate Dr. James's generalizations about special education that show bias in a controversial field. The summary fashion in which these needs are considered will offer him little enlightenment. We wholeheartedly agree that 'developmental paediatrics is of great importance for the doctor dealing with school children' (p. 115), but accordingly merits consideration in much greater depth. Thus, the indiscriminate statement that all behaviour problems are 'invariably' due to the way in which the child has been handled in the past, and that educational problems in older children are 'invariably related to child management, or psychiatry' (p. 131), apart from being untrue, provide no practical guidance to the school doctor in his day-to-day handling of children with behaviour and learning problems, by far the commonest he will meet in educational medicine.

At a time when the comprehensive assessment of handicapped children is increasingly acknowledged as being a matter for co-operation between disciplines, the omission of any reference to the organization of local authority services and the role of other professional workers is particularly unfortunate. The short list at the end of each chapter of publications for further reading must still be regarded as minimum essential reading for the doctor entering the school health service.

**The Nature of Childhood Autism.** 2nd ed. By GERALD O'GORMAN. (Pp. vii + 163; illustrated + tables. £2.40.) London: Butterworth. 1970.

**Non-Communicating Children.** By LOUIS MINSKI, and MARGARET J. SHEPPERD. (Pp. ix + 188; illustrated and tables. £2.50.) London: Butterworth. 1970.

The increase in length in the second edition of O'Gorman's book on autism is largely due to the addition of three further case histories and to an expansion of the section on treatment. Psychotherapy and making a relationship are dealt with more extensively, and sections on conditioning procedures, habit training and group activities have been added. Zazlow's 'rage reduction' treatment is described as often beneficial (the papers on this method given in the text are omitted from the references). In spite of the systematic studies of Kolvin and others, O'Gorman continues to assert on the basis of one case that autistic children frequently have a family history of schizophrenia, and despite well-publicized reports to the contrary he claims again that identical twins are always concordant for autism. Inexplicably, the twins called Barbara and Jennifer in the first edition have now been renamed Beryl and Gillian.

This idiosyncratic account of autism is lively, interesting, and very readable but entirely personal. It gains its importance from O'Gorman's extensive clinical experience of the condition, but readers should be aware that the book ignores the considerable clinical and experimental research done since the first edition and gives scant attention to the earlier work. The author also has the remarkable achievement of writing for 163 pages on autism without once referring to any of Kanner's papers or even noting his epoch-making first account of the condition in 1943.

Minski and Shepperd's account of non-communicating children consists of an analysis of 474 children seen since 1953 at the Belmont unit, one of the very few in-patient centres for the investigation of these children. The description of the various conditions associated with failure of language development is of interest, and it brings out the complexity of the clinical problems. However, its value is limited by the failure to obtain follow-up information on so many of the cases. Practical accounts of psychological and auditory assessment are given by Dr. Bowley and Miss Taylor, and Dr. Evans provides a brief account of some of the unit's research. The didactic style of the book at times conceals controversy, but it contains some useful thoughts on the problems of non-communicating children.

**British Medical Bulletin. Volume 26, No. 3. Drugs: Development and Use.** Scientific Editor: D. R. LAWRENCE. (Pp. 266. £2.00.) London: The British Council. 1970.

This issue contains some short specialist reviews, designed primarily for physicians, on the trials, triumphs, and tribulations which have followed the introduction of new drugs. Paediatricians will be interested in the age-related mortality rates over the past 50 years, especially for rheumatic fever and diabetes in children. And there is a succinct account of the recent rapid rise in deaths from asthma, and the fall which has followed recognition of the danger of excessive use of drugs such as isoprenaline in pressurized aerosols.

There is also a serious omission. In all the precise and often ponderous descriptions of drug testing and clinical trials, there is no reference to the hazards of new drugs to the young child. In this country a manufacturer is required to test a drug only for teratogenic and toxic activities on adult animals. The special physiological and metabolic problems of late fetal and neonatal life are ignored. An antibiotic can be released for use in patients of all ages, with no tests for toxicity in young animals and no clinical trial in young patients. This is unwise as experience with one antibiotic has already shown. There is ample evidence that drugs are metabolized in different ways at different ages. Paediatricians should be especially wary of new drugs or new drug combinations.