

authoritatively. They deal with the preparation of human growth hormone and methods for its assay in biological fluids, the metabolic actions of growth hormone, its interactions with other hormones, the treatment of dwarfism with growth hormone, and the problems that result from the development of antibodies to the hormone during therapeutic use. Each chapter is succinct and, most important, backed up by a comprehensive bibliography. Two of the chapters, dealing with the preparation of growth hormone and its assay, are complemented by technical appendices. These are inappropriate to a book of this scope for most of those concerned with the extraction and measurement of growth hormone will choose to work from more authoritative sources than this book.

If the book were half the price and thereby presumably paper backed it could be recommended as a worth-while purchase for endocrinologists and paediatricians with a developing or established interest in the hormone. As it is, the volume will find a justified place on the shelves of medical and biological libraries where it will be consulted with gratification by those who want a quick entrée into the topics it covers.

**Pediatric Therapy.** 4th ed. Edited by HARRY C. SHIRKEY. (Pp. xxiii + 1221; 443 illustrations + tables. £15.50.) London: Henry Kimpton; St. Louis: Mosby. 1971.

Writing on another book on paediatric therapy 2 years ago, our reviewer wrote 'Is the idea of divorcing therapy from the rest of medicine a good or even a possible one? This book has failed to convince one reader that it is.' The volume edited by Dr. Shirkey and written by 96 contributors is large, elegant, and magnificently produced. 300 pages are devoted to general principles and methods of treatment, approximately 800 to treatment of specific disorders, and there are valuable and detailed sections distinguished by coloured pages on poisoning and on drug dosage and use. There are excellent cross-references.

The question still remains as to whether a book on therapy is worth while. Most paediatricians will have arrived at a strategy for dealing with the common disorders they meet, and they will only change this in response to a really well-argued original paper showing that a particular method of treatment is better than what they already do. They are therefore likely to consult a book on therapy mostly in relation to rare disorders. Here they may be disappointed: on histiocytosis X, for example, there are three very short sections which will tell few paediatricians more than they know already. For the less experienced paediatrician the book also has limitations as a guide to management. Will he be satisfied with febrile convulsions being discussed in two sentences—'Febrile convulsions are managed in no different manner than are the afebrile variety. Anti-convulsants are introduced with the first seizure'. The initiated will note that Dr. Sidney Carter is co-author of this chapter, and will remember the impression made by his paper 'Management of the child who

has had one convulsion' (*Pediatrics*, **33**, 431, 1964). But one hears the distraught resident on Saturday night saying 'But Dr. Carter, what do I say to the parents? And what do they do if he gets another fever? Or another fit?'

There are other articles which present too personal a point of view to be accepted as standard statements of current treatment. After reading Dr. Hilde Bruch's perceptive article on obesity, I felt that all the inadequacies of my treatment of this disorder had been exposed. But I also felt that my (admittedly pretty insecure) faith in dietary treatment had been destroyed without anything tangible being offered in its place. I had been told how to behave with an obese child but not how to treat him. On recurrent abdominal pain the reader is offered no guidance at all.

Yet there are very many really excellent chapters, not all of which one would think of looking up in a book on therapy. The section on 'Modification of laboratory tests caused by drugs' is a unique compilation; and Dr. James Sussex's chapter on 'Death of a child patient' is one of the most helpful practical accounts of what the paediatrician should do in relation to all the other people involved. There are more obvious pearls like Dr. Harry Schwachman and Dr. Kon Taik Khaw's account of the Boston Children's Hospital regimen for cystic fibrosis.

This is a valuable book, but it is probably better value to browse through it at leisure than to use it as a shelf bible to consult in an emergency.

**The Therapeutic Choice in Paediatrics.** Based on a Symposium of Medical Advisers in the Pharmaceutical Industry and the British Paediatric Association. Edited by W. L. BURLAND and B. M. LAURANCE. (Pp. xii + 228; illustrated + tables. £3.00.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 1972.

A symposium is made up of varied contributions differing in content and quality, and this book, though admirably edited, reflects this characteristic. Once committed to publishing the proceedings of a symposium, the editors must accept indifferent presentations with the brilliant.

A meeting between practising paediatricians and medical advisers to the pharmaceutical industry is reported. There are sections on clinical investigations, placental transfer, action of drugs, immunization, cytotoxic therapy, and neuro- and psychopharmacology. Most of the chapters present summaries of the state of knowledge in late 1970 on a wide selection of therapeutic problems. The section on immunization presents the scientific basis of prophylaxis against the infectious fevers with evidence from experimental and field studies. The review of placental function in 3 chapters presents the modern concept of the function of the placenta in immunity and medical therapy with clarity and a wealth of evidence from original work. In the specialist chapters, acknowledged experts review briefly the field of their work. Except for a chapter on the practical implications of trials of therapy in

children, the section on clinical investigation is least satisfying.

Though most practising paediatricians will be familiar with a large proportion of the material in this book, the several chapters consolidate the background of therapeutic choice. Much of the basic information can be abstracted for teaching, and extensive lists of references lead one to the original researches. Practitioners and senior students will find readable accounts of important aspects of therapy. The specialist research worker will not in any case be looking in this direction for references.

**Ano-rectal Malformations in Children.** By F. DOUGLAS STEPHENS and E. DURHAM SMITH. (Pp. xvi + 411; 159 illustrations + 39 tables. £11.70.) London: Lloyd-Luke; Chicago: Yearbook Medical Publishers. 1971.

This is an exceptionally good book. The authors have studied and treated children with anorectal anomalies ('imperforate anus') for many years. Now they present their opinions clearly and with full discussion of the alternative views on management. They make an impressive case for their methods. The book begins with a historical survey and goes on through embryological, anatomical, physiological, clinical, and radiological diagnostic and therapeutic aspects, to close with a thorough account of the results obtained.

The results show the great importance of differentiating infra- and supralelevator anomalies. The results of treating the former are excellent, but only 63% of the latter achieved a 'good' marking, even with the authors' puborectalis preserving procedure. Nevertheless, only 4% were frankly 'poor', and the value of long-term management and training after operation is evident.

The fallacies of the traditional upside down x-ray are shown, and the sophisticated radiological anatomical studies of the authors' colleague, Justun Kelly, form an invaluable section of the book.

The newly recommended international classification with its 33 varieties of 'imperforate anus' is used and is seen to be justified by the many variations in what used to be simply called 'imperforate anus'. This book should do much to prevent the lifelong tragedies of incontinence which followed such appalling procedures as 'cruciate incision and exploration of the hollow of the sacrum', and regrettably sometimes still do.

**Congenital Malformations. Notes and Comments.** By JOSEF WARKANY. (Pp. xl + 1309; illustrated + tables. £31.60.) Chicago: Yearbook Medical Publishers; London: Lloyd-Luke. 1972.

This is an astonishing book, if only as to size. With its 1300 closely printed pages it is comparable dimensionally to the standard textbooks encompassing the whole of paediatrics such as 'Nelson', yet all the work of a single author. In the 1950s Warkany's pioneering work first directed paediatricians to the need for them to

devote the same kind of systematic study to congenital defects and their causation as had earlier led to such rich dividends in the case of infective and metabolic disorders.

In the subsequent years three landmarks in the subject were to appear, the recognition of rubella embryopathy, thalidomide embryopathy, and chromosomal defects. In turn each led to hopes that maternal infections, or toxic drugs, or chromosomal defects would be found to account for an important number of major fetal defects. In the event, only a small proportion proved to be so caused, and the cause of the vast majority of cases remains unknown. For this reason, a book on congenital defects might become little more than a catalogued series of descriptions, and to some extent this is true here, as the author himself admits. But here the information has been garnered from such wide sources and has been collated and presented so attractively as to disarm such a criticism.

Take, for instance and at random, the confused and confusing matter of arthrogyposis; this occupies a section of 4½ pages with 44 references and tells us just what is known about this subject. The busy clinician faced with a case is thus admirably equipped to answer the questions he and the parents will want answered (What is the pathology? What lesions is it likely to be associated with? What are the chances of further offspring being affected?), while if he requires to go into the subject in more depth he has the references to guide him. The reviewer has dipped into this rich book to see how Warkany has handled a score of other subjects, and has met with few disappointments, though it was surprising to be unable to find any reference to the subject of limb constriction rings.

Numerous photographs, pedigrees, and diagrams illustrate the text, and animal analogues are used to give point to the text wherever such experimental work seems to be germane.

Present and future generations of paediatricians will bless Warkany for having produced so splendid a book.

**Infantile Autism: Concepts, Characteristics and Treatment.** IRMR Study Group No. 1 held at the Ciba Foundation, London, 15-17 June 1970, under the auspices of the Institute for Research into Mental Retardation. Edited by MICHAEL RUTTER. (Pp. xi + 328; illustrated + tables. £3.50.) Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1971.

This is probably the most important publication, and certainly one of the most stimulating, dealing with this subject to date. The study group members (listed at the end) have all been actively involved in clinical work concerning autistic children. The contributors approach this central problem from different angles. What is encouraging is to discern both clarification and, if not agreement, at least a most significant selectivity, which is now enabling researchers to narrow down their areas of work. The range is still wide, but this book helps to bring together such agreements as are