

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 ano-rectal 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