

Book reviews

Rheumatic Fever (MPCP—Vol. II). 2nd Edition. By M. MARKOWITZ and L. GORDIS. (Pp. 309; 61 figures + 42 tables. £4.90.) Philadelphia and London: Saunders. 1972.

This second edition of *Rheumatic Fever*, prepared by two of her previous students, has been dedicated to the late Ann Gayler Kuttner, and includes a short commentary on her work at Irvington House, New York.

The opening chapter discusses the changing pattern of rheumatic fever. While commenting on the decline and severity of first attacks and the frequency of recurrences, as well as the reduction in rheumatic heart disease in young people, the authors suggest from survey work in the U.S.A. that the actual incidence of first attacks has not greatly declined. It is, however, noted that in the U.S.A. the incidence among the 'black' was considerably higher than among the 'white' populations. The fall in the incidence of chorea is also drawn attention to, as is the fact that the relation between chorea and rheumatic fever still remains unexplained.

After an excellent review of the structure, biochemistry, and immunology of the β -haemolytic streptococcus, its role in the development of rheumatic fever is considered in the light of present-day knowledge. The clinical features, together with diagnosis, course, and differential diagnosis, are well described, as are the various laboratory, radiographical, and ECG techniques which can be usefully employed.

The chapters on treatment and prevention give a balanced review of the literature and indicate practical ways that satisfactory management can be achieved, while the feature on chronic rheumatic heart disease includes an extremely useful comment on possible complications.

This book is supplemented by appendices that include the revised Duckett Jones Criteria, the current principles in the prevention of rheumatic fever, and the methods of culturing haemolytic streptococci from the throat, as well as by excellent references. It will be of value to anyone working in this field and to the physician who occasionally treats rheumatic fever. It could have been made even more interesting by giving more detail on rheumatic fever in the developing countries and on the problem of rheumatic fever in this country being rare in children but occurring in adolescents and adults. Some speculation as to what has caused this change would have been welcome.

The Yearbook of Pediatrics. Edited by SYDNEY S. GELLIS. (Pp. 430; 130 illustrations + tables. £7.00.) London: Lloyd-Luke; Chicago: Yearbook Medical Publishers. 1973.

It is a pleasure to welcome the new *Yearbook of Pediatrics*, which is as lively, interesting, and informative

as its predecessors. Dr. Gellis does a great service to paediatricians in the choice of the abstracts and in the detailed and pungent editorial comments from himself and others. There can be no better or more up-to-date textbook than a row of these *Yearbooks*.

Radiology in Obstetrics and Antenatal Paediatrics. (Radiology in Clinical Diagnosis Series). By J. G. B. RUSSELL. (Pp. ix + 234; illustrated + tables. £4.95.) London: Butterworth. 1973.

The unassuming format of this book hardly prepares the reader for the high standard of the offering he will find within its limp cover. In the compass of only 220 pages we are given a distillate of the experience of obstetric radiology of St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester. The chapters on radiation hazards and on placental localization are particularly well done; that on assessment of fetal maturity provides an extremely useful atlas giving the x-ray appearances of the lower limbs in fetal life from 26 to 36 weeks at 2-week intervals, and thereafter by 1-week intervals. These, like the rest of the many illustrations are reproduced with welcome clarity. Modern techniques such as ultrasonics and isotope placentography are included, and are shown to complement, or sometimes to be preferable to, radiography. Serial ultrasonic cephalometry is considered to be the best method for assessing retarded intrauterine growth.

This is an admirably practical book, strongly recommended to paediatricians and obstetricians alike.

Neonatal Dermatology. Vol. IX in Major Problems in Clinical Pediatrics. By LAWRENCE M. SOLOMAN and NANCY B. ESTERLY. (Pp. xii + 214; illustrated + tables. £7.00.) Philadelphia and London: Saunders. 1973.

With the increasing emphasis on the neonate, it is inevitable that a textbook devoted to this phase of life will appear in almost every sub-specialty of paediatrics; indeed there is much to be said for having separate monographs on various subjects because they can be more comprehensive than a single, large text.

The first section of this book is concerned with general topics such as structure and function of fetal and neonatal skin, types of lesion, diagnostic procedures, and principles of therapy. The following chapters are devoted to specific diseases. The authors have deliberately avoided an atlas-type of presentation and emphasize the importance of cutaneous disorders as frequent manifestations of systemic disease. One might criticize the inclusion of some material that is not strictly dermatological; for instance, chromosomal abnormalities are described in a section on developmental abnormalities.

There is a good classification of naevi in Chapter 8, but the descriptions of the various types are then scattered confusingly over the next 3 chapters covering vascular and pigmentary disorders. The section on scaling disorders is excellent, with many useful tables summarizing eponyms, modes of inheritance, and clinical features. Eczema and the vesicobullous eruptions are quite well covered, as are infections. There is a chapter on infiltrative diseases which includes such conditions as lupus erythematosus and mucopolysaccharidoses. The final two chapters describe disorders of the nails, hair, and subcutaneous tissue.

The 16 pages of colour plates are rather irritatingly

grouped together, making cross reference between them and the text somewhat laborious, particularly as the legends do not include page numbers. Black and white illustrations are liberally interspersed at appropriate places in the text; their quality is variable. This reviewer would, however, have pleaded for more pictures.

There is much information in this book and it could be quite a valuable reference work for paediatricians, particularly as it is not confined exclusively to the neonatal period. It might also be useful for dermatologists who are frequently consulted about newborn infants.