

Book reviews

Paediatric Allergy and Clinical Immunology as Applied to Atopic Disease. A Manual for Students and Practitioners of Medicine. 4th Edition. By CECIL COLLINS-WILLIAMS. (Pp. vi+161; 13 illustrations+11 tables. £4.00.) Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1973.

This book is essentially a handbook for the staff of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and presents the author's instructions for the investigation and management of allergic conditions in childhood. It is mainly concerned with asthma but has small sections on other allergic conditions. The book consists essentially of a series of shorthand notes on various aspects of the subject. It is written very much in the school of some North American allergists and provides detailed accounts of history taking and treatment by means of environmental and dietary regulation as well as hyposensitization. The practising paediatrician might find it a little strange that so little of this book is devoted to the very major advances in the drug treatment of childhood asthma which has occurred in recent years. A rather unfortunate feature of the text is that trade names are frequently used in place of official names for various drugs.

Renal Disease in Childhood. 2nd Edition. By JOHN A. JAMES. (Pp. ix+377; 116 illustrations+tables. £10.55). St. Louis: Mosby; London: Kimpton. 1972.

Paediatric nephrology is now emerging as a major subspecialty and the next few years will doubtless see the appearance of a number of books devoted to the subject. The first attempt was not particularly distinguished; but *Renal Disease in Childhood*, now published in its second edition, has been largely rewritten with considerable improvement. After an account of normal anatomy and physiology, the book discusses the symptomatology and investigation of renal disease, congenital defects, urinary tract infection, glomerulonephritis and the nephrotic syndrome, the problems of acute and chronic renal failure, and miscellaneous disorders.

The best chapter is that on urinary tract infection, giving a good account of aetiological factors, problems of diagnosis, management, and prognosis. Disappointingly, those dealing with glomerulonephritis and the nephrotic syndrome do little to clarify the prevailing confusion, and perpetuate a number of misconceptions. The morphological illustrations would have had greater impact if they had been assembled in a single chapter to form a coherent picture of the range of glomerular diseases encountered. On the other hand, advice on management is everywhere full of commonsense, emphasizing the avoidance of needless hospitalization and restriction of activity.

Some of the chapters are too detailed for the non-

specialized paediatrician, for whom the book is intended, yet the work as a whole is not sufficiently comprehensive for the specialist. Much space is devoted to physiological principles but few practical hints on the performance of everyday renal function tests can be found. Some caution on the hazards and limitations of renal biopsy in the hands of the enthusiastic occasional operator would have been more appropriate than a mere description of the technique. There is a complete chapter on dialysis and transplantation, while the common problem of recurrent haematuria is dismissed in less than two pages. This imbalance is perhaps a reflection of the author's own practice, but leaves the general reader with the feeling that the book has not quite achieved its objective.

Infectious Diseases of Children and Adults. 5th Edition. By SAUL KRUGMAN and ROBERT WARD. (Pp. x+494; illustrated+tables. £9.70). St. Louis: Mosby; London: Kimpton. 1973.

The authors of the 5th edition of this textbook have altered both their brief and the book's name to include disorders affecting both children (as in previous editions) and adults. The standard field of infectious diseases is covered and this edition also includes chapters on tuberculosis, the major venereal diseases, and a practical reference guide to methods of active immunization. The appendix on antibiotics and chemotherapy has been brought up to date and expanded.

The general standard of the text is high, and for the clinician there is good balance between basic microbiology and the clinical. The style is clear and apposite, and the illustrations and diagrams are instructive and generally of good quality.

The section on hepatitis, as expected from the senior author, is excellent both in depth and clarity and is a most valuable survey of current thinking in the field. The section on immunization schedules is practically useful, and also comprehensive, dealing with vaccines currently available in this country and the tropics.

The authors state that there are no chapters on malaria, yellow fever, and the leptospiroses. The omission certainly of the first of these is surprising (and perhaps unreasonable) in a book with potential worldwide appeal. Of perhaps less importance in a student textbook is the omission of antiviral agents from the section on chemotherapy. A single column of the table would at least have introduced them to readers new to the field and suggested their roles in, for example, the treatment of herpes simplex and zoster infections.

This is a most readable work that certainly offers medical students an enjoyable means of learning about infectious diseases. Few students will be readily able to afford the book, which would, however, be a useful addition to a larger library.