

Book reviews

Perspectives in Paediatric Pathology. Vol. 3. Edited by H. S. ROSENBERG and R. P. BOLANDE. (Pp. xiii+363; illustrated+tables. £27.00.) London: Lloyd-Luke. 1976.

This is the third of a series of annual collections of articles on current topics in paediatric pathology which for the first time are presented as an official publication of the Pediatric Club of North America. The authors are all based in American or Canadian centres. As in previous volumes there is an admixture of practical and theoretical topics, including lethal chondrodysplasia in early infancy, infantile cholestatic syndromes, neonatal hepatocellular giant cell transformation, metabolic cirrhoses, neoplasia and teratogenesis, Wilms's tumour and allied lesions, neoplasia in the Beckwith-Wiedeman syndrome, ischaemic bowel disease in the newborn, and prenatal diagnosis. It is clearly designed primarily for paediatric pathologists but should also be of value to neonatologists and paediatricians.

The chapter on lethal chondrodysplasia is marred by the minute illustrations which those unfamiliar with the radiological and histological features of these disorders will find to be of very limited value. Undoubtedly the most valuable chapters for the practising paediatric pathologist (as well as the paediatrician) will be those on neonatal and infantile liver disease which, in addition to discussing the pathogenesis of cholestasis, giant cell transformation, and metabolic cirrhosis, indicate the techniques required to confirm the specific diagnosis.

There is inevitably considerable overlap between the chapters on neoplasia and teratogenesis, Wilms's tumour, and the Beckwith-Wiedeman syndrome, but this is in no way detrimental and it is beneficial to read these four articles as a single unit. There is an excellent review of neonatal ischaemic bowel disease, a condition much commoner in North America than in the United Kingdom. The final chapter on prenatal diagnosis includes the assessment of fetal maturity, growth, and well-being *in utero*. These are covered very briefly and would probably have been better omitted to allow a more detailed discussion of the pathology of prenatally diagnosed abnormalities.

The presentation is generally of the

high standard we have come to expect in this series; references are numerous, comprehensive, and up to date, and the quality of the illustrations is for the most part very good. However, many who had intended to collect this series on an annual basis will be seriously reconsidering this policy in view of the alarming increase in price of the latest edition.

D. I. RUSHTON

Widening Horizons of Child Health. By ALFRED WHITE FRANKLIN. (Pp. 279; tables £5.95.) Lancaster: Medical and Technical Publishing Co. 1976.

This is a review of the illness seen in children in Great Britain in 1970. It deals with the preschool child, and the disorders of vision, hearing, and communication, then with chronic handicap and long-stay residential care and with hospital paediatrics, then it goes on to the contribution of the general practitioner. (The book assumes that the people who are to speak for the general practitioners are the College of General Practitioners. But the College is a minority body and some effort should have been made to get the views of the remainder of the practitioners.) Psychiatric disorder and mental handicap are dealt with, as are cerebral palsy and epilepsy. The remaining chapters are concerned with various system disorders.

It is in competition with the summary of the 1000 families school health programme and now of course with the Court Report. As a report on the health of the group concerned it falls midway between the 1974 report on the 1000 families* and the Court Report. It is less readable, but deals with 1970 as opposed to the years 1947 to 1962. It is 250 pages compared with the 400 of the Court Report (which also deals with what is the plan for the future). But the trouble is that the Court Report is required reading for everyone. As a report on what the health of children in 1970 was, *Widening Horizons of Child Health* is without a rival.

R. C. MAC KEITH

*Miller, F. J. W., Court, S. D. M., Knox, E. G., Brandon, S. (1974). *The School Years in Newcastle upon Tyne*. Oxford Univ. Press, London, New York.

Asthma in Children. Edited by JAN A. KUZEMKO. (Pp. 122; illustrated+tables. £3.50.) London: Pitman. 1976.

Asthma in Children. By R. S. JONES. (Pp. 270; illustrated+tables. £10.00.) London: Arnold. 1976.

By an extraordinary coincidence, two paediatricians well known to those of us interested in asthma each wrote a book entitled *Asthma in Children*. These were published almost simultaneously. I enjoyed reading both books and found them to be complementary in many ways so that I do not have to make invidious comparisons between books written by authors who both know what they are writing about.

The book written by Jan Kuzemko is suitable for the general practitioner and general paediatrician rather than the specialist. He provides a clear though brief review of the basic physiology and immunology and then concentrates on the clinical aspects of childhood asthma and its management. The section on drugs is written extremely well by Dr. S. Walker, but I felt it was too detailed and rather out of keeping with the style of the rest of the book—though I personally found it useful. The treatment of asthma is well covered but unfortunately drug doses are often recommended in absolute terms rather than in relation to body weight and this can be a problem, especially with aminophylline.

The book by Dick Jones is an ideal starting point for the specialist (or future specialist) interested in asthma in children. He gives a very readable and detailed account of the epidemiology of childhood asthma and the section on physiology is as good as one would expect from the originator of our modern appreciation of the importance of bronchial lability. Some readers will be pleasantly surprised to find a truly excellent section dealing with emotional factors written by Dr. Jones himself. I thought the clinical sections in the book were not quite as good as the more basic aspects of the subject.

The size and price of the two books, as well as their contents, will, I believe, mean that they will be selected by the two different groups of readers. British paediatrics has made a major contribution to the understanding of childhood asthma at all levels in recent years and these two books largely reflect this situation.

S. GODFREY