

Book reviews

Primary Child Care. A Manual for Health Workers. By M. King, F. King, and S. Martodipoero. (Pp. 315; illustrated + tables. £2.00, soft cover.) Oxford University Press: London. 1978.

Maurice King's name became a byword in 1966 when he produced the 'Red Bible'—*Medical Care in Developing Countries*. Many would say that the production of this book was a turning point in the approach to health in developing countries. Since then Maurice King has written *Nutrition in Developing Countries* and a laboratory manual. Now, after a number of years of intensive work in Surabaya, he has brought out a book that may be more important in its direct effect than any of his previous writing. This new book is a system of primary care and is intended for adaptation and translation in whole or in part as one part of WHO's contribution to the International Children's Year—1979.

This book covers the diagnosis, understanding, and management of common conditions of childhood and, at the same time, shows how this can be built into a comprehensive system of child care with a necessary emphasis on prevention.

The author has taken great pains over detail in layout, choice of illustration, and simplicity of English. Although written for medical assistants it will be used by nurses, medical students, and doctors, many of whom in developing countries will for the first time possess their own book on child health, thanks to the low price of only £2.

This book is only part of a package or micro-plan and will be shortly followed by a teachers' guide which will contain 3000 multiple-choice questions and much other

guidance material in the management of child health centres. Some 240 coloured transparencies of the common conditions so well managed in these books will also be available.

DAVID MORLEY

Surgical Conditions in Paediatrics. Post-graduate Paediatric Series. By H. Home-wood Nixon. (Pp. 448; illustrated. £23.00, hardback.) Butterworth: London. 1978.

Is there any place today for the medical treatment of pyloric stenosis, or for local anaesthesia in its surgical treatment? What are the proved facts about the causation of intussusception, and what is the place of the barium enema in its diagnosis and management? What is the place, if any, for surgery in rectal prolapse, or in umbilical hernia? How to choose between the often very diverse treatments enthusiastically recommended for exomphalos? These are the sort of day-to-day questions about which the paediatrician so often longs to be able to button-hole a paediatric surgeon of experience and wisdom, and to pick his brains. Nixon's book, expressly written for medical paediatricians, goes a long way towards meeting this very need. His long experience at Great Ormond Street (his predecessor Denis Browne's aphorisms happily enliven and enlighten the text) is here distilled and in a most agreeable style. To cite one instance, if there is a more succinct and practical guide to the handling of the thorny subject of the undescended testicle, your reviewer has not met it. And as would be expected,

the section on anorectal anomalies, a subject to which Nixon has contributed much, is beautifully lucid and practical. Less so are only one or two sections, such as the one on meconium ileus which fails to give a clear programme for handling these cases, or to explain when and how the Gastrografin enema (described first in 1970 though here as 'recently') should be used. Sternomastoid tumour, another often debated condition, is not mentioned, perhaps being assumed to be nonsurgical anyway.

The illustrations are plentiful and effective, the one on p. 371 sufficiently so to have forced me to revise my hitherto simplistic teaching that there is no such thing as tongue-tie.

DOUGLAS GAIRDNER

Shorter notice

Heart Disease in Infancy and Childhood. Third edition. Edited by J. D. Keith, R. D. Rowe, and P. Vlad. (Pp. 1083; illustrated + tables. £36.00, hardback.) Ballière Tindall: London. 1978.

A big welcome for the long awaited 3rd edition of this pioneering book! It is bursting with new chapters and new ideas, and for such a large book is remarkably up to date, containing many 1977 references. Some sections, and particularly the approach to nomenclature, are rather confused, and many angiocardigrams are poor. But the book remains a standard reference work, and a must for any library of paediatrics or cardiology. Size apart it could well be termed the paediatric cardiologist's vade-mecum.