Book reviews

Colour Atlas of Paediatric Facial Diagnosis. By Trevor P Mann. Pp 195: £70.00 hardback. Clinical Press, 1989. ISBN 0-85457-001-3.

This is an atlas with details and photographs of 97 different conditions covering the spectrum of childhood disease past and present. It is the essence of one man's experience and sweet it is too. How much more exciting it proves to be than many of the syndromal texts that now clutter our shelves, many of which we buy because they add a few more conditions, data, or references. One does not usually browse over such books but here is an exception: this one you will buy to read and admire, reminisce with, and above all teach from.

The author splits the book into two sections, the first to cover neonatal topics and the second those that make their mark later on. In the first part 27 conditions are divided under the subheadings of skin, hypothermic states, infections, miscellaneous disorders, central nervous system diseases, and teratological syndrome. Part II lists 70 conditions under the subheadings of chromosomal abnormality syndromes, connective tissues diseases, endocrine system diseases, inborn errors of metabolism, 'extinct' disorders, facial dysmorphic syndromes, growth disturbances, infections, miscellaneous disorders, muscle diseases, nervous system diseases, and pigmentary disturbances. The text for each condition is in turn briefly historical and then descriptive. The salient points that lead to diagnosis are stressed and spiced with references to the individuals portrayed. For some of the more common conditions there are relevant but short tables that include lists of causes, clinical features, investigative signs, progressive changes, and so on. Three or four carefully chosen references complete the text.

There are 315 photographs, mostly in

colour, to illustrate the text. These are of uniformly excellent quality and have been carefully chosen to show, often in one glance, the salient and distinctive features of the condition being described. Sometimes several pictures of the same face in repose, laughter, or tears are used to heighten the appearance and signs while sequential reproductions reflect the changes that take place with growth—or as in the child with systemic sclerosis—recovery.

Unfortunately a reviewer can rarely expect to find his ideal and perfect book and so it is in this case. This one represents after all part of one paediatrician's experience and I suspect only a morsel of that, with each fragment chosen for the quality of the photographs and some particular interest to the author. It should not come as a surprise that in such an atlas some territories are less well charted than others and that occasional important place names have been left out. Sadly it could not be comprehensive.

Who then will want to buy this expensive but beautiful book. The answer is simple—it is every paediatrician, regardless of age, who can afford it. Those that can't should make doubly sure that their unit has one and that is readily available to teachers, juniors, nurses, and students alike to learn from and enjoy.

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Clinical Pediatric Neurology. By G Fenichel. Pp 401: price not stated, hardback. W B Saunders, 1988. ISBN 0-7216-1896-0.

Dr Fenichel has divided this book into 18 presenting complaints which provide the chapter headings. Monoplegia, disorders

of ocular motility, and psychomotor retardation and regression are typical examples. Each chapter has between 40 and 120 references selected for ease of access with reviews preferred to original reports. The text is followed by an excellent index and the whole adds up to 400 pages bursting with useful specific clinical information.

With a single author the book has a pleasing consistency of style—which is spare and didactic, particularly on management issues. Sometimes brief discussions with references will allow the reader a chance to form his own opinion from the literature. The approach to diagnosis and treatment is recognisably transatlantic and many British readers will find statements with which they disagree. However, I found both this different view point and the structuring of the subject by symptoms stimulating.

The book refers to many obscure entities but 'infantile bilateral striatal necrosis', 'Machado-Joseph disease', and 'pontobulbar palsy with deafness' seem more digestible when arranged by a prominent presenting symptom than when ranged, as in some texts, like dusty curiosities in an anatomy museum bearing no relationship to their neighbours. This apparent orderliness of this book is partly an illusion as many of these disorders could equally logically have been discussed in other chapters in the same book. Nevertheless, one is left with an impression of a good deal of accurate information and personal experience presented in a readable and clinically relevant fashion.

I think that both general paediatricians and paediatric neurologists will find this book a useful supplement to a disease based account of paediatric neurology: its strengths tend to lie at the points where other texts are weakest.

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