concern with which this book has been written and edited. The *Oxford Textbook* is a testimonial to the best in British medicine and to a great clinical school.

CHRISTOPHER BOOTH

Leading kindly light

Practical Problems in Medicine. "Childhood Asthma: Diagnosis, Treatment and Management." A D Milner. (Pp 160; figs and colour plates; £29.95.) London: Dunitz, 1987. ISBN 0-948269-02-2.

It is indeed a highly practical book, from one of the leading lights in childhood asthma. Tony Milner's superb unit at Nottingham has produced much basic research on asthma, and this and other research is well incorporated into the book to explain the rationale for treatment.

The chapters are well illustrated. Diagrams and graphs are clear and instructive. Even radiographs, which are usually difficult to reproduce, are clear, with one exception when a negative has been printed. At the end of each chapter a small list of practical points summarising the salient messages is given, an aid to digestion which I found very helpful.

Professor Milner writes clearly and concisely, and his style is gentle. He is excellent on atopy and increased bronchial lability. There is a chapter on the measurement of lung function that may be too esoteric for many readers, but this is offset by a thoughtful chapter on diagnosis. Drug treatment, including the use of different inhalation systems, is well covered, and allergy, allergen avoidance, and desensitisation are discussed, albeit with slightly less conviction. Alternative therapies, including herbal remedies and homoeopathy,

Contributors

SIR CHRISTOPHER BOOTH is director of the Clinical Research Centre, Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow, Middlesex.

D ISAACS is a Wellcome senior lecturer and honorary consultant paediatrician at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford.

are not omitted. If I have one reservation about Professor Milner's approach to asthma it is his reluctance to acknowledge the importance of psychosomatic factors. Psychotherapy is given half a page and in the "practical point" at the end of the chapter is misprinted as physiotherapy.

A chapter on the management of childhood asthma in general practice by Douglas Jenkinson covers general practice problems, including the use of peak flow meters and nebulisers, adolescent problems, which patients to refer, and exclusion diets. Finally, there are some representative case histories that bring the reader into the real world of practical problems in diagnosis and management, and a parent's chilling story that has the dual function of illustrating how disastrous mismanaged asthma can be and allowing the reader to put down the book thinking he could have done better.

A book that will be invaluable to general practitioners and to junior and senior paediatricians.

D ISAACS

What's new in the new editions?

CLIFFORD HAWKINS

The delinquent contributor, said a publisher when we were discussing matters that spoil harmonious author-publisher relationships, is his bane—a view undoubtedly shared by all editors. The author willingly agrees to write a chapter for a book: the deadline arrives and passes but no contribution comes and it becomes too late to find a substitute. The curious paradox is that he—or possibly she—is often conscientious (perhaps overcommitted) and reliable, yet lets down colleagues and delays publication of the book. A financial bonus for writers who send their typescripts on time has not helped, and one publisher has decided to test whether a crate of wine would be more tempting. Normally about 50% send their work before the deadline, 30% let it trickle in later, and 10% have to be badgered or may renege.

Drugs for the Heart. 2nd expanded edn. Ed L H Opie. (Pp 256; figs; \$18.95 paperback.) Orlando: Grune and Stratton, 1987. ISBN 0-8089-1840-0.

The metamorphosis is striking. The book was born in 1980 as a series of articles published in the *Lancet* and bound together to produce a pocket book. Beside it is the present edition: elegant, polished, and written with an appropriate blend of the academic and practical—confusing matters such as the mechanisms of anti-arrhythmic drugs being explained by superb line diagrams, and tables providing a quick guide to, for example, the advantages and disadvantages of all the antihypertensive agents. The editor, who is professor of medicine at the University of Cape Town and consultant professor at Stanford University, California, enlisted a team of American contributors. He attributes the rapid appearance of this edition, which is an updated version of an American one produced in 1984, to everyone's "unstinting cooperation." The 11 chapters clarify the confusing current state of cardiovascular pharmacology and, as Professor Opie writes, "the physician has great power for poor as well as for good results.... We must constantly be asking ourselves whether the therapy can be simplified or stopped; and, conversely, whether the time has come for one of the more vigorous regimes described in these articles."

Its format has several interesting features: variations in typeface, summary headings at the top of each page as well as summaries in the text, and separate lists for new references (these are updated to

mid-1986) and for reviews. It is still a pocket book, but its height, 10 inches (26 cm), ensures that it will—like stethoscopes and other equipment—fall out of the pocket when the doctor runs to an urgent case. A plea for a purpose designed white coat with internal pockets that do not gape open and with attachments for stethoscope and patella hammer was made on this page in 1983 (287, p 1875), and a letter was written to the Department of Health and Social Security, but I am still waiting to hear from the latest committee debating the matter.

Burns and Their Treatment. 3rd edn. I F K Muir, T L Barclay, J A D Settle. (Pp 192; figs; £25.) London: Butterworth, 1987. ISBN 0-407-00333-9.

No breakthrough for the treatment of the burn itself seems to have occurred since the last edition, written in 1974, but methods of resuscitating the collapsed patient have been bettered—for example, intravenous feeding is covered—but it is a pity that proprietary named drugs are recommended in patients with large burns (p 103); our pharmacist tells me, however, that, for example, Irofol C containing ferrous sulphate, folic acid, and vitamin C is hardly more expensive than the drugs given separately, but this and the multivitamin preparation Concavit were put on the blacklist (non-prescribable in the National Health Service) about 18 months ago. An important advance is described in the section on the treatment of scars and contractures (pp 150-61); the text and excellent photographs illustrate this.

The photograph of the forest of intravenous drip stands in a ward when 63 patients with burns were admitted after the Bradford football stand fire in 1985 (p 170) underlines the strain that can be put on the burns team, the administration of which is fully covered in chapter 9. The first chapter about the scope of the burns problem is new, with up to date figures about burns and scalds in children: the development of flame retardant nightwear, as well as the change from nightdresses to pyjamas, has reduced serious burns in girls, and the general reduction in the number of open fires has helped to reduce injuries related to clothing. Morale in a burns unit can be low: gloom and despondency is engendered by the high mortality in the elderly, but morale is improved when badly injured children survive and prosper—as illustrated by pictures. It is unfortunate, as the foreword states, that “children and the elderly should bear the brunt of our apparent unwillingness to screen our fires, to protect our cookers and to elaborate methods of rendering clothing less inflammable.”

A Guide to General Practice. 2nd edn. The Oxford GP Group, edited by S Street, A Wilkinson. (Pp 176; £7.95 paperback.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific, 1986. ISBN 0-632-01526-8.

Written in 1979 by 10 newly trained general practitioners, this edition has been thoroughly revised, and new parts include a desirable weight chart, a dermatome chart, the normal value of peak expiratory flow in adults and children, and all about family planning; the page on the first antenatal visit now adds screening for antibodies to human T cell lymphotropic virus type III to the routine tests; also the Denver developmental screening tests cover everything about the growing child—from grasping a rattle to hopping on one foot—and there are two pages for special telephone numbers, and advice about confidentiality. Suggestions are offered about books for the bookshelf, and one experienced general practitioner said that he would find it useful because it contains so much compact information—for example, it not only provides the right action to take for a doctor called to a cot death, but gives the address of the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths, which should be notified.

As a pocket book it can be carried by the trainee, but he, like me, may be mystified by some of the new items included in the checklists for the various compartments of the traditional “black bag”: diagnostic, therapeutic, administrative, obstetric, dispensing, and road traffic accident—the last includes airway, fire extinguisher,

fluorescent jacket, giving set, and, as additional items, blankets, camera with flash, and so on. Also, why are adhesive plasters now included as an aid to diagnosis? My colleague, Dr F D R Hobbs, senior lecturer in the department of general practice, suggested that it was for collecting eggs from children suffering from pruritus ani. He agreed that some of the lists, in attempting to be comprehensive, became removed from practice and considered that some of the book was more suitable for medical students; and he would have liked more information about practice administration.

A Paediatric Vade-Mecum. 11th edn. Ed J Insley. (Pp 320; figs; £12.50 paperback.) London: Lloyd-Luke, 1986. ISBN 0-85324-206-2.

This popular pocket book, coming from the Birmingham Children's Hospital, contains much that is new since the last edition in 1982.

As the foreword states, the section on development has been rewritten and includes advice on auditory and visual assessments, the nutrition section has been overhauled, and much is new in the part about investigations. Chapter subjects include fluid and electrolyte therapy and parenteral nutrition; the neonate; prevention and management of illness; infections; emergencies; accidental poisoning; casualty; outpatients; and social and medicolegal.

Paediatric prescribing has been brought up to date with a special entry for neonatal drugs, and the edge of this part of the book is marked in black for easy and quick reference. The caution list (pp 122-66) has been extended, but there is no mention of the risk of killing children by injecting potassium instead of sodium chloride. One or two deaths occur each year, as the ampoules are generally identical except in the West Midlands, where they have been changed.¹

Ethical Issues in Death and Dying. 2nd edn. Ed R F Weir. (Pp 400; \$40 hardback, \$15 paperback.) New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. ISBN hardback 0-231-06222-2, paperback 0-231-06223-0.

“The field of thanatology, the study of death and dying, was still reasonably new and was dominated by research done by psychiatrists and social scientists” when this book was first published in 1977, states the preface (readers will no doubt know that thanatos is Greek for death) and “two research centres were gaining national reputations” in the United States of America.

The editor, who is professor of philosophy at Oklahoma University, has produced virtually a new book rather than a revised edition—with the help of contributors (no details about them are given). Chapters deal with truth telling, the definition and determination of death, selective non-treatment of the handicapped newborn, treatment abatement with critically ill patients, euthanasia, and suicide. Nowadays ethical issues overlap with legal developments, and important legal cases are included together with judicial judgments. The book, which is well researched and includes previous work, faces practical issues such as “Must always give food and water?” “Options for an easier death,” “The right to refuse treatment,” “Killing and letting die,” and “The least worse death.”

A Guide to Radiological Procedures. 2nd edn. S. Chapman, R Nakielnny. (Pp 288; figs; £8.95 paperback.) London: Baillière Tindall, 1986. Distributed by Holt-Saunders. ISBN 0-7020-1170-3.

Written in note form, this small book lists—with technical details, occasional line drawings, and suitable references—most of the numerous techniques available to radiologists, from the barium meal to percutaneous nephrolithotomy. New sections since the last edition in 1981 include intravascular contrast media, percutaneous lung biopsy, temporomandibular arthrography, air meatography (for viewing the internal auditory meatus), and others. Appendix IV

provides a useful flow chart for treating emergencies and complications that can occur in the radiological department and later; dopamine (for treating cardiogenic shock), naloxone (for cases of overdosage with morphine-like compounds), and protamine sulphate (for bleeding from heparin) have been added to the list of drugs. Appendix V describes macroradiography: an enlarged radiograph is especially useful for studying, for example, carpal bones and the lung in pneumoconiosis. The book would easily go into the white coat pocket of a junior doctor especially interested in radiology.

Progress in Psychiatry Series. "Can Schizophrenia Be Localized in the Brain?" [Based on a Meeting, Los Angeles, California, 5-11 May 1984.] Ed N C Andreasen. Series editor D Spiegel. (Pp 104; figs; £15.) Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1986. Distributed by Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-33275-3.

Progress in Psychiatry Series. "Treatment of Affective Disorders in the Elderly" [Based on a Symposium, Dallas, Texas, 21 May 1985.] Ed C A Shamoian. Series editor D Spiegel. (Pp 104; £15.) Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1986. Distributed by Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-33274-5.

Progress in Psychiatry Series. "The Borderline: Current Empirical Research." [Based on a Symposium, Los Angeles, California, 8 May 1984.] Ed T H McGlashan. Series editor D Spiegel. (Pp 128; £15.) Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1986. Distributed by Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-33277-X.

Progress in Psychiatry Series. "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Children." [Based on a Meeting, Los Angeles, California, May 1984.] Ed S Eth, R S Pynoos. Series editor D Spiegel. (Pp 208; figs; £15.) Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1986. Distributed by Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-33271-0.

Psychiatrists may be interested in this series of erudite but readable and informative small books that originate from symposiums given at the American Psychiatric Association's annual meetings: the best—usually about 10% of about 80 symposiums a year are chosen by the scientific programme committee. They are "designed to capture in print the excitement that comes from assembling a diverse group of experts... to examine in detail the newest information about a developing aspect of psychiatry" and, so far, the following topics have been dealt with: "Can schizophrenia be localised in the brain?" "The borderline: current empirical research," "Treatment of affective disorders in the elderly," and

"Post-traumatic stress disorder in children"; the last deals with children traumatised by witnessing acts of personal violence such as homicide, rape, and suicide, and children who are victims of incest or suffer physical or sexual abuse. The psychological effects are described with references to previous work, but long term studies have not yet been done, so it is not known whether such stress causes a permanent scar in the psyche and whether the method of handling the child lessens or perhaps increases the risk of this.

New Studies in Biology. 3rd edn. "Human Genetics and Medicine." Sir Cyril A Clarke. (Pp 128; figs; £4.95 paperback.) London: Arnold, 1987. ISBN 0-7131-2944-1.

If you wish to brush up your knowledge of genetics this small book could even be included in your bedside reading, for it is readable and has all the advantages of a single author book. Moreover, it is seldom possible now to buy a medical book for less than £5. This looks better than the last, 1977, edition with bold print for subheadings, and it has an index. New material includes the association between HLA types and diseases, the fragile X syndrome (connected with mental retardation and "so-called because in squash preparations in which cultured material is 'squashed' between glass slides the X chromosome readily fractures at a particular site"), and an interesting bit about alcohol: "The Japanese are polymorphic for the genetically controlled aldehyde hydrogenase enzymes and about half the population have an unusual form which causes them to flush and have various other unpleasant vasomotor symptoms on consuming alcohol"—yet they now drink more, despite side effects.

The section "Genetics and preventive medicine" includes a clear and interesting account of the discovery of the introduction of prophylactic anti-D immunoglobulin, which produced such a dramatic fall in the occurrence of haemolytic disease of the newborn and was the work of this distinguished author. His interests in genetics have always been wide—he once suggested that God had created butterflies for the geneticist because of their varying wing patterns, on which he is also an authority—and the reader will learn that racehorses are particularly liable to haemolytic disease but ponies almost never, the risks being related to the presence or absence of naturally occurring antibodies. And under molecular genetics the example given of the new technique of transfection (see glossary) is that the gene responsible for luciferase, the firefly's lantern, can be incorporated into plant cells so that their internal structure can be better shown up on photographic films.

Hawkins C. Hazard of potassium chloride solution. *Br Med J* 1987;294:54.

Some new editions

Basic Bone Radiology. 2nd edn. H J Griffiths. (Pp 240; figs; £32.05 paperback.) Connecticut: Appleton and Lange, 1987. Distributed by Prentice/Hall International. ISBN 0-8385-0536-8.

Children with Handicaps. A Medical Primer. 2nd edn. M L Batshaw, Y M Perret. (Pp 494; figs; £19.95 paperback.) Baltimore: Brookes, 1987. ISBN 0-933716-64-8.

Contemporary Neurology Series. Vol 28. 2nd edn. "Clinical Neuroendocrinology." J B Martin, S Reichlin. Editor-in-Chief F Plum. (Pp 784; figs; \$90.) Philadelphia: Davis, 1987. ISBN 0-8036-5886-9.

Cope's Early Diagnosis of the Acute Abdomen. 17th edn. Revised by W Silen. (Pp 300; figs; £12.50 paperback.) New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. ISBN 0-19-504298-1.

Dubois' Lupus Erythematosus. 3rd edn. D J Wallace, E L Dubois. (Pp 792; figs; \$98.) Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1987. ISBN 0-8121-1005-6.

Emergency Orthopedics. The Extremities. 2nd edn. R R Simon, S J Koenigsnecht. (Pp 456; figs; £64.15.) Connecticut: Appleton and Lange, 1987. Distributed by Prentice/Hall International. ISBN 0-8385-7532-3.

Evaluating Orthopedic Disability. A Commonsense Approach. 2nd edn. T R Miller. (Pp 128; figs; £21.75 paperback.) New Jersey: Medical Economic Books, 1987. ISBN 0-87489-437-9.

From Knowledge to Wisdom. A Revolution in the Aims and Methods of Science. Paperback edn. N Maxwell. (Pp 304; £5.95 paperback.) Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987. ISBN 0-631-15641-0.

Guide to Clinical Laboratory Diagnosis. 3rd edn. J A Koepke, J F Koepke. (Pp 432; figs; £35.25 paperback.) Connecticut: Appleton and Lange, 1987. Distributed by Prentice/Hall International. ISBN 0-8385-3519-4.

A Handbook for Medical Teachers. 2nd edn. D Newble, R Cannon. (Pp 176; figs; £12.95.) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1987. ISBN 0-85200-673-X.

Handbook of measurement and Evaluation in Rehabilitation. 2nd edn. B Bolton. (Pp 384; £27.25.) Baltimore: Brookes, 1987. ISBN 0-933716-63-X.

Introduction to Biopsy Interpretation and Surgical Pathology. 2nd edn. J C E Underwood. (Pp 232; figs; £19.50 paperback.) London: Springer, 1987. ISBN 3-540-17495-8.

Jeffcoate's Principles of Gynaecology. 5th edn. Revised by V R Tindall. (Pp 736; figs; £45.) London: Butterworth, 1987. ISBN 0-407-00235-9.

McGoon's Cardiac Surgery: An Interprofessional Approach to Patient Care. 2nd edn. K M McCauley, A N Brest, D C McGoon. (Pp 424; figs; \$93.75 paperback.) Philadelphia: Davis, 1987. ISBN 0-8036-5950-4.

Pediatrics. 18th edn. Ed A M Rudolph, J E I Hoffman. (Pp 1972; figs; £42.) Connecticut: Appleton and Lange, 1987. Distributed by Prentice/Hall International. ISBN 0-8385-7798.

Physical Management for the Quadriplegic Patient. 2nd edn. J R Ford, B Duckworth. (Pp 688; figs; \$55.) Philadelphia: Davis, 1987. ISBN 0-8036-3676-8.

Protocols for High-Risk Pregnancies. 2nd edn. Ed J T Queenan, J C Hobbins. (Pp 472; £22.50 paperback.) New Jersey: Medical Economics Books, 1987. ISBN 0-87489-429-8.

Saunders Monographs in Clinical Radiology. Vol 2. 3rd edn. "The Radiology of Joint Disease." D M Forrester, J C Brown. (Pp 576; figs; £49.50.) Philadelphia: Saunders, 1987. Distributed by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. ISBN 0-7216-3827-9.

Therapeutic Factors in Group Psychotherapy. Paperback edition. S Bloch, E Crouch. (Pp 356; £8.95 paperback.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. ISBN 0-19-261679-X.