Book Reviews

Advances in Non-Invasive Nephrology. Proceedings of the International Congress of Non-Invasive Diagnosis of Kidney Disease, held in Vienna, September 1983, edited by Gert Lubec and Vito Campese. Pp. xi + 300, illustrated. John Libbey, London, Paris, 1985. £30, US\$53, Ffr385.

The cleverly conceived title of this symposium served to bring together workers from many different disciplines from all over the world to present what was in 1983 the latest in diagnostic techniques available to the nephrologist. Having left full time nephrology shortly after this symposium I was distressed to find how much I did not know about the subject even then and this book has been a delightful opportunity to bring myself at least partially up to date. It has sections on radiology and related imaging, non-radiological imaging techniques and a large section on biochemical methods, a third of which is devoted to urinary enzymes. There is a section on pathophysiological background comprising a brilliant review by Jan Brod on hypertension, which should have a wide appeal. There is also an immunological section.

Inevitably the choice of subjects appears idiosyncratic and incomplete but I have to say that very few of the 64 chapters fail to yield something of interest. I enjoyed particularly chapters on radiological and non-radiological imaging many of which gave a very good background to the techniques, and sufficient information for radiologists interested in expanding their diagnostic facilities for nephrology patients. Most of the chapters are quite short with well presented data and illustration and the references given at the end of each chapter are consistent in style and seem to be well chosen without being exhaustive.

The book is a must for nephrologists and I will lend it to both my biochemical and radiological colleagues and I feel also that there is enough in it to interest the enlightened general physician. It is well worth its price of £30.

M.J. Weston
*Chelmsford and Essex Hospital,
London Road,
Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0QH.*

Aids to Clinical Examination, Peter C. Hayes and Ronald S. MacWalter. Pp. iii + 114, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £4.95.

This book aims to be an aid both for undergraduate and postgraduate students. As the authors state in their introduction, many students have their own prepared cards as a help in clinical examination. This book may replace these notes and could encourage systematic examination.

In the first 9 chapters different organ systems and/or parts of the body are reviewed. The remaining 10 chapters are devoted to selected clinical conditions. The framework of the book is well-organized, the discussion of the different subjects sometimes amazingly complete (auscultation over the eyeball!).

All chapters are divided according to the kind of examina-

tions (inspection, palpation, etc.). At the left side of each page catchwords are mentioned, followed by explanations and/or additions at the right side. This division makes the book easily accessible.

Some points of detail show (minor) shortcomings. For instance in the chapter on diabetes mellitus too much emphasis is laid on urinalysis, an examination which is rapidly losing ground when compared with the daily blood glucose profiles made by the patients themselves at home. Also it could have been stated in the chapter on thyrotoxicosis that the obvious form is nearly always caused by Graves' disease and that the hyperthyroid patient with a multinodular goitre often has monosymptomatic disease (mostly tachycardia).

On the whole, this book can be a useful aid for students and may also be helpful for those physicians who are not very experienced in clinical examination. The book could well become as popular as the 'Aids' to undergraduate and postgraduate medicine by J.L. Burton which was published earlier by the same publisher.

J.W.F. Elte
*Department of Internal Medicine,
St. Franciscus Gasthuis,
NL – 3045 PM Rotterdam, Netherlands.*

An Autumn Life: How a Surgeon Faced His Fatal Illness, Ethel Helman. Pp. 96. Faber, London, Boston, 1986. £2.95.

In 1980 Percy Helman, an internationally renowned surgeon, discovered that he was suffering from the very disease against which he had been fighting throughout his professional life: cancer.

This is the story of how he, his wife Ethel, their family and their friends coped with the initial shock, the effects of illness on family relationships and the surges of optimism and despair that accompanied the progress of the disease. It was inspired by, and is based on tapes recorded by Percy Helman as he monitored his own physical and mental reactions during the two years of his illness. The tapes are, in part, a medical record. They also reflect his hopes and fears as they chart his response to the challenges his illness made upon him. His outlook on life was radically altered and his own life enriched by his dependence on others and by a greater understanding of the needs of other cancer patients.

Ethel Helman found the tapes after her husband's death. Convinced that they were made for the purpose of helping others to face the prospect of serious illness, she has integrated them with her own account of their experience as a family. *An Autumn Life* is a tribute to Helman's resilience and courage. It also confirms Percy Helman's claim that the last months of his life, filled with a new compassion for his patients and a more acute awareness of simple pleasure, were for him the best time.

This story was especially moving for me because it dealt with people's attitudes to death and to the dying. I have always shied away from such a morbid subject, but since a

great deal of my future will be concerned with the care of the terminally ill I have had to formulate my own opinions. Now foremost in my mind is that the quality and not quantity of life is of the essence for the dying. This message came over loud and clear again and again from the dying surgeon who recorded his feelings as his condition worsened. Furthermore Percy's resilience and courage as he continued to work and achieve more and more throughout his last days was a great example to us all. I was particularly touched by his reply on his death bed to the question: 'what would you do with your life if you had your time all over again?' to which he answered: 'I would spend much more time talking to my patients'. This was characteristic of this humble man who was grateful for the small mercies and simple pleasures.

A.A.P. Connolly,
Oxford Medical Student,
Green College,
Woodstock Road,
Oxford.

Current Orthopaedics, Vol. 1, No. 1, September 1986, edited by Robert A. Dickson. Pp. iv + 131, illustrated, Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1986. Quarterly subscriptions: institutions: £60.00 (UK), £65.00 (overseas), \$95.00 (USA); individuals: £39.00 (UK), £44.50 (overseas) \$67.00 (USA).

With the continuous proliferation of new journals which is taking place, the arrival of yet another new one must be carefully scrutinized. One must consider what the new journal can add to the already overcrowded field, and whether one would make time to read it. Fortunately, it is planned to produce *Current Orthopaedics* quarterly, so that it will not conflict too much with the monthly volumes of the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*. It is planned as a review journal, which will cover the whole range of adult and children's orthopaedics and trauma, plus regular articles on basic science and imaging.

There is no doubt that Professor Dickson and his team have produced a first class introductory volume. A variety of important clinical problems is discussed in reasonable detail. There is an excellent 'mini-symposium' on the various aspects of failed joint replacements. In the basic science section Stephen Perran discusses the response of bone to injury. Other contributions by experts are a section on juvenile chronic arthritis by Dr Barbara Ansell and on flexor tendon injuries by Raoul Tubiana and Beveridge.

If this is a sample of things to come, then it is certain that this new journal will be a success. For postgraduates working for high degrees it will be mandatory for pre-examination study, and overworked consultants will find the review articles will save them a considerable amount of background reading. At the cost of £39.00 for a personal annual subscription, it should prove to be a bargain.

L. Klenerman,
Northwick Park Hospital,
Watford Road,
Harrow,
Middlesex HA1 3UJ.

Handbook of Clinical Phonology: Approaches to Assessment and Treatment, Mary Elbert and Judith A. Gierut. Pp. xi + 170, illustrated. Taylor and Francis, London, 1986. £15.

This book is aimed at those studying and practising speech therapy. Some chapters are interesting and useful and others are disappointing. The introductory chapter on phonological development is very short and therefore lacks detail and examples. Traditional methods of assessing speech production are clearly described. In trying to avoid being judgemental the authors do not emphasize the dangers of these approaches which can give a superficial and misleading picture of a child's phonology. This could be confusing for a student of speech therapy. Following this summary of past approaches to assessment the reader is promised a guide to assessing the child's own unique sound system. However, the assessment procedures outlined prematurely compare the child's productions to adult targets. Practical exercises are included in the chapters on assessment. The final two chapters deal with intervention and facilitating the generalization of speech skills. The authors show imagination when giving examples of how knowledge from detailed assessments can guide therapy and enhance its effectiveness. The final chapter on generalization is particularly good. It includes interesting descriptions of studies that investigate how the treatment of certain structures can lead to different kinds of spontaneous generalization. The authors' suggestions on how to facilitate generalization are well thought out and very practical. They will be particularly useful for students and inexperienced speech therapists.

This book should be of interest to all those assessing and treating children with phonological problems. The chapters on treatment include useful practical advice.

Rachel Gaughan
Chief Speech Therapist for the Deaf
Bloomsbury, Hampstead and Islington District Health
Authorities,
Finsbury Health Centre,
Pine Street,
London EC1R 0JH.

Human Genes and Diseases, edited by F. Blasi. Horizons in Biochemistry and Biophysics. Vol. 8. Pp. xii + 676, illustrated. John Wiley, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore, 1986. £45.00.

This book costs £45 for which one gets sixteen reviews by 38 authors, photaset and quite nicely bound together. Some of the reviews cover broad areas (e.g. Ramirez and colleagues on collagens), others are more specialized (e.g. Leone on metallothionein gene regulation in Menke's disease). The general level is similar to chapters in *Annual Reviews of Genetics*, with substantial lists of references.

I do not doubt the quality of the sixteen individual chapters, but do question whether the whole is more or less than the sum of the parts. The book has been photaset from typescripts with different typefaces and styles of referencing. This is displeasing to the eye and, more important, means the editor had very little control over the content. The English of