the editorial decision, made perhaps in the interests of economy, to eschew photographs and X-rays in favour of sometimes turgid verbal descriptions of endoscopic, radiological and histological appearances. More line diagrams might have helped here, as well as in the explanation of processes such as digestion, absorption and the enterohepatic circulation. Lastly, for a first edition, I noticed remarkably few errors – a low sodium diet contains rather more than 20 nmol Na/day (p. 3), lactulose is not primarily a motility stimulant (p. 43) and angioneurotic oedema is not due to cholinesterase deficiency (p. 364)!

Some people like to learn their medicine from 101b multi-author tomes covering all the subspecialties. For those who prefer more compact, single-subject texts, this excellent book can be thoroughly recommended.

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Parasitic Infections of Pregnancy and the Newborn, edited by Caroline MacLeod. Pp. viii+308. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988. £35.

A minimum of 150 million births take place every year. Eighty five per cent of these are in developing countries where standards of environmental hygiene tend to be less than ideal and parasitic infections are commonplace. Therefore an enormous number of women of childbearing age are obviously being exposed to such parasitic infections and it is clear that the special risks to them and their infants are insufficiently well understood. This is especially noticeable in relation to preconceptional and interconceptional care and the appropriate use of drug therapies.

To remedy this dearth of both reference and practical resource information, Dr Caroline MacLeod has herself either written or co-authored ten of the fifteen chapters, in addition to being the inspirer and overall editor. The book is thus the outcome of her interests over a number of years in tropical medicine and maternal and child health. It displays her genuine concern for better understanding of the significant parasites involved, better educational and preventive programmes, and better management and treatment based on further research and allocation of resources. Her other contributors are all eminent and experienced. The book is clear, concise and consistently presented – with a strong clinical emphasis on maternal, fetal and neonatal effects of the parasite in each instance and how these should be treated. There is an excellent first chapter about recognizing parasitic infections in pregnancy, a useful penultimate one about the pregnant traveller; and a taut conclusion about prevention which stresses the value of an intersectoral approach for success with all maternal and child health programmes at community level.

The AIDS picture is given in all its complexity as background to the important role played by parasites as opportunistic infections in women and children with HIV infection. But even without AIDS, pregnancy is a time of increased risk to mother and new-born from parasitic infections and this book should interest obstetricians,

gynaecologists and paediatricians, as well as specialists in infectious disease; it also supplements general textbooks of tropical medicine and parasitology extremely usefully and is particularly recommended for people planning to work overseas, including medical students on electives in MCH. Final note: it will please her many admirers to see that Dr MacLeod has so appropriately dedicated this excellent book to Dr Cicely Williams.

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Pathophysiology of Heart Disease, edited by N.S. Dhalla, P.K. Singal and R.E. Beamish. Pp. xiv+376, illustrated. Martinus Nijhoff Publishing, Boston, Dordrecht, Lancaster, 1987. £56.50.

This book contains a number of scientific papers concerning selected aspects of heart disease presented at a meeting devoted to fundamental cardiac research. For the clinician, the value of such publications is in allowing one a glimpse of present fundamental research and possible future developments in our understanding of heart disease and its treatment. At the very least, to read such a book will enable one to understand better the jargon and the scientific thought behind future research and advances in therapy, and at least one word which was new to me, 'Luistropic' may well become a buzz word over the next few years. The word refers to those substances which enhance the relaxation of cardiac muscle just as inotropic drugs enhance its contraction.

The book commences with an excellent review by Arnold Katz of some clinically important aspects of cardiac physiology, many of which are dealt with in greater detail later in the book. This introduction could be read with advantage by all cardiologists, but inevitably many of the later papers are more specialized and therefore of less immediate interest, as well as being less easily understandable.

This is a book for cardiac departments to have in their library, rather than for individual cardiologists to buy. Cardiologists in training and those of their seniors who retain some intellectual curiosity should be encouraged to read it.

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Practical Problems in Medicine – Childhood Asthma, edited by Anthony D. Milner. Pp. vii+148, illustrated. Martin Dunitz, London, 1987. £29.95.

This small book gives a first class account of essential knowledge for all dealing with childhood asthma. The author has presented a distillation of fact, hypothesis, and guidelines for management in a form which is a pleasure to read. The ground covered includes underlying mechanisms of wheeze, the relationship between genetic predis-

position and environmental precipitants, and the place of wheezy bronchitis and acute bronchiolitis within the spectrum of asthmatic disorders. Lung function tests are dealt with, and the value of peak flow measurement is stressed.

The discussion of drug treatment is a model of clarity and simplicity, bringing easy understanding of the principles of management. The division of this section into three age groups, i.e. less than one year, one to five years, and over five years will improve the clinical approach and confidence of its readers in dealing with acutely wheezy children. The place of allergen avoidance and the very limited place for desensitization are dealt with, and alternative medicine therapies are touched upon.

The place of the family doctor in management is emphasized, especially in the chapter by Dr Jenkinson, who holds the view that most asthmatic children can be cared for by their general practitioner. The success of such care will clearly depend upon the interest and expertise of the doctor and his skill in communicating with children and their parents. He could do no better than to read this excellent book, which is highly recommended also to hospital doctors and others dealing with asthmatic children.

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The Respiratory System. Measurement in Medicine Series, Vol. 2, edited by D.G. Cramp and E.R. Casson. Pp. 395, illustrated. Croom Helm, London, Sydney, 1987. £49.50.

The generation and testing of hypotheses in the field of respiratory physiology has owed much to the use of

models and these have developed over the years from being simply representational to be of considerable complexity.

It is the realm of the respiratory physiologist to perceive these unanswered questions where modelling may be of assistance, and it is now often necessary to seek the help and advice of a mathematician to assist in the elaboration of the model. This interdisciplinary activity is difficult to achieve and there is a need for the physiologist to have a greater knowledge of the general principles underlying mathematical modelling, and for the mathematician to have a deeper insight into the problems and limitations of physiology.

This problem is addressed by this latest volume from the series 'Measurement in Medicine'. The physiologist is well served within its pages, which offers an insight into models of most types, although their mathematical development will probably tax the numeracy of most physiologists. It is not bedside reading but is nonetheless valuable, calling only for a little application on the part of the reader.

The mathematician is perhaps less well served, since the two chapters on respiratory physiology — one from Oxford and one from Edinburgh — whilst perfectly adequate, will fail to point out to the mathematician those areas where his skills might best be deployed.

The hardback volume has been produced from camera ready copy and has not been typeset, but the standard of good printing has been preserved. The editors are to be commended for tackling a difficult problem and achieving a modest success.

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Books Received

ABC of Dermatology, edited by P.K. Buxton. Pp. 91, illustrated. British Medical Journal, London, 1988. £10.95 UK, £13 abroad.

Adult Abnormal Psychology, edited by E. Miller and P.J. Cooper. Pp. x+380. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1988. £29.95.

Dilemmas in Otorhinolaryngology, edited by D.F.N. Harrison. Pp. xii+374. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1988. £45.

Genital Tract Infections in Women, edited by M.J. Hare. Pp. x+378, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1988. £50.

Learning Psychiatry through MCQ, edited by Tom Sensky. Pp. x+259. John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, West Sussex, 1988. £9.95.

Magnesium in Clinical Practice, edited by Jean Durlach. Pp. xix+360. John Libbey & Co., London, 1988. £35 UK; \$68 US; FF415.

Nerve Injury and Repair, edited by G. Lundborg. Pp. 222. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1988. £50.

Occupational Therapy in Mental Health, edited by Derek W. Scott and Noomi Katz. Pp. viii+222. Taylor and Francis, London, New York, Philadelphia, 1988.

Procedures in Practice, edited by various authors. Pp. viii+187, illustrated. British Medical Journal, London, 1988. £6.96 UK; £8.75 abroad.

Recent Advances in Otolaryngology — 6, edited by Roger Gray and John Rutlea. Pp. viii+253, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, 1988. £35.

Tuberculosis and Leprosy, edited by R.J.W. Rees. Pp. 523–820, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, 1988. £22.50.