'the CNS and its reactions to disease' and covers embryological development, neuroanatomy, microscopy of the normal nervous system, the blood-brain barrier, reactions to disease, regeneration and glial cells – all in 32 pages! No prolixity here. Subjects in which the authors are especially at home are particularly nicely treated – trauma, oedema and intracranial expanding lesions, and vascular disorders and hypoxia. Other chapter headings include infections, intoxications, deficiency states, demyelinations, developmental and perinatal pathology, dementias and tumours. Sections on muscle and peripheral nerve were written by Dr Denis Harriman. There is a good index and the photographic reproductions are of good quality and well chosen although legends are brief and some illustrations would be more readily understandable if more labels had been used. Each chapter has a few references, mostly to reviews or monographs.

The inevitable result of trying to cover a vast clinical laboratory science (the book deals only with the human nervous system) in 300 pages means that, even if each photograph is worth a thousand words, the treatment of each topic must be short and superficial and there is the danger of the product becoming a catalogue. This is certainly not the case here and the authors have managed to create a succinct book packed with information.

So this reviewer recommends the book – but the question remains *to whom?* In their preface the authors disclaim any intention of providing a profound, comprehensive text that might compete with a large reference work such as *Greenfield's Neuropathology*. They claim the intention of taking 'a simple and pragmatic approach to neuropathology and (wish) to persuade general pathologists that the proper examination of the brain and spinal cord is a simple straightforward exercise'. How wrong can they be! It is anything but a simple straightforward exercise and general pathologists know it. That is precisely why 'many of them cursorily slice the unfixed brain in the post mortem room' as the opening paragraph of the preface states – it could add 'and throw it away'. It would be nice to think that this book could change bad habits, but there is no doubt in this reviewer's mind that it will not. This excellent little book, very reasonably priced, is not for the differentiated post-mitotic specialist, neither clinician nor pathologist, and is certainly not for neurologists or neurosurgeons. It can be strongly recommended for senior medical students, who should find it stimulating, and postgraduate trainees preparing for their higher qualifications who will find plenty of answers to examination questions, pointers to more detailed reading and much to indicate what a wonderfully interesting subject Neuropathology is.

L.W. Duchon
Department of Neuropathology,
Institute of Neurology,
National Hospital,
Queen Square,
London WC1N 3BG.

Mainstream Medicine – Nephrology, A.M. Davison.
Pp. viii + 374. Heinemann Medical Books, London, 1988. £12.95.

The latest addition to Heinemann's *Mainstream Medicine* series of short specialist textbooks has been produced by a

distinguished practising nephrologist. The series is aimed mainly at postgraduates preparing for MRCP (UK) but also seeks to be useful at the bedside by 'summarising relevant information at rather more lengths than is possible in a general textbook of medicine'. Hopefully these two aims are not unrelated. I am sure that careful study of this volume would repay most MRCP (UK) candidates and I am equally sure of its potential usefulness in the clinical situation. One could speculate however, whether, for either of these stated purposes, this work has any major advantages, other than transportability, over say the relevant section in the *Oxford Textbook of Medicine*.

Having said that, what has been produced is a readable authoritative but not comprehensive resumé of contemporary nephrology. There are good chapters on dialysis, transplantation, glomerulonephritis, systemic diseases and urinary tract infection. The section on renal physiology is perhaps a little sparse. There are no chapters on the important topics of fluid and electrolyte disturbances and drugs and the kidney. The content is reasonably up to date though monoclonal erythropoietin, anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody, and continuous arteriovenous haemodialysis do not gain a mention, which serves to indicate the pace of recent development. The tables are in the main thoughtfully constructed and complementary to the text. Diagrams are useful but scarce. There are a few slips showing through the proof reading such as the designation of 'hyperkalaemia' as a feature of Fanconi syndrome. Overall though the book will fulfil its stated aims and is reasonable value at £12.95.

K. Farrington
King George Hospital,
Ilford
Essex IG2 7RY.

Mansons Tropical Diseases, 19th edition, edited by P.E.C. Manson-Bahr & D.R. Bell. Pp. xvii + 1557, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, W.B. Saunders, London, 1987. £49.50.

Textbooks on tropical medicine may be of two types: one dealing solely with tropical diseases and parasites (descriptions of which seldom change), the other, in addition to the above, also includes conditions common but not peculiar to developing countries (not necessarily tropical). The nineteenth edition of this book has been radically revised and enlarged and fits the latter category.

New sections include diseases commonly presenting with fever, diseases commonly presenting with diarrhoea, and protecting the traveller. A section on ectoparasites and myiasis brings a number of diverse conditions under one heading. There are also two chapters on the differential diagnosis of fever, and of diarrhoea which naturally result in some overlap with the above sections.

New subjects include cardiovascular diseases, respiratory problems and metabolic disorders (primarily diabetes). The chapters on haematology (includes the leukaemias), gastroenterology (includes a small section on liver disorders), tuberculosis, neurology, dermatology, cancer, eye disorders and sexually transmitted diseases have been considerably enlarged. The latter chapter now includes a section on AIDS.

As in previous editions the appendices include an excellent section on drugs and their metabolism. The section on

parasites and entomology is better indexed. The section on laboratory diagnosis has been completely revised and together with helpful diagrams provides useful and practical guidelines for side-laboratory techniques.

The chapter on malnutrition follows the style of previous editions in not offering a classification, equating PEM with kwashiorkor and giving only half a page to marasmus. Marasmus and marasmic kwashiorkor are the commonest problems in most developing countries and need to be put in their proper perspective. Vitamin A deficiency suffers from being divided between the chapters on vitamin deficiency and eye diseases.

There is more attempt to make reference to children than in previous editions, particularly in offering suggested paediatric drug dosage. However, for most paediatricians, the information on some subjects is too scant to be of practical value.

This nineteenth edition with its considerable revision is an excellent textbook on medical disorders in the tropics. Those wondering whether to invest in it or hold on to their previous edition would be strongly advised to do the former.

J.B.S. Coulter

*Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine,
Pembroke Place, Liverpool L3 5QA*

Social Aspects of AIDS, edited by Peter Aggleton & Hilary Homans. Pp. vii + 194. The Falmer Press (a member of the Taylor & Francis Group), London, New York, Philadelphia, 1988. Cloth £19.95; paper £7.95.

This book is blatantly political and would be better retitled 'A Political account of HIV infection and AIDS: homosexual aspects.' There is only passing mention of social aspects of AIDS in haemophiliacs, heterosexuals, or intravenous drug abusers (all of whom have numerous social aspects): these striking omissions would, despite the contributors' obvious intentions, lead the naive to think, quite wrongly, that there was some unique association between AIDS and homosexuality.

There is too much inductive reasoning with generalized conclusions being drawn from single instances. It is surely

ludicrous to draw general conclusions from blatantly idiosyncratic utterances made by individual police constables, politicians, or doctors, or made in newspaper articles (one contributor, seemingly to his surprise, discovered that not everything in print is correct and that there is indeed rubbish in the gutter press). There is no significance in the suggestion that some doctors have recommended mass quarantine; there are only a few of these doctors who would freely admit that their views are not the conventional wisdom. There are surely more important things for the authors to become enraged about and the only conclusion that should be reached is that the publicity that unconventional views receive is the price we have to pay for freedom of speech.

It is easy to be wonderously wise in retrospect. Yes, there is a small group of people who may have made errors, have been misunderstood, harshly criticised, and blamed for *deliberately* furthering the epidemic, this group is the government who *in retrospect*, may have acted too late or inappropriately.

The last chapter contains opinions which suggest that the author or the reviewer are on a different planet. 'Shocking and obnoxious ... way in which the social group most affected ... has simply been left to suffer and die.' 'Lesbians and gay men ... erased from public consideration. AIDS is not just a homosexual disease ... is a "shocking and disgraceful statement" (because it suggests that gay men are disposable)'. Gay men 'have been efficiently *kept* (my italics) in ignorance of AIDS throughout the 1980s by courtesy of this government'. 'The government's AIDS initiative ... couched in ... blood-lust, hatred, and thinly veiled contempt ... offered a heady brew of racism, misogyny, and homophobia.' (Why misogyny is included I'm not sure, but no doubt our Prime Minister will take this to heart.)

Strangely, I conclude by recommending that this book be read. To read a book which reinforces your views is merely a reassurance: to read a book which offers insights into the vastly differing views of others *based on the same facts* is an education.

P.D. Welsby

*Department of Infectious Diseases,
City Hospital,
Edinburgh E10 5SB.*

Books Received

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Diagnostic Tests in Neurology, G.D. Perkin. Pp. viii + 322, illustrated. Chapman and Hall Medical, London, 1988. £19.95.

Diagnostic Tests in Respiratory Medicine, John Rees. Pp. vii + 240, illustrated. Chapman and Hall Medical, London, 1988. £19.95.

Essential Radiology in Head Injury, D. Mok & L. Kreeel. Pp. 215, illustrated. Heinemann Professional Publishing, Oxford, 1988. £35.00.

A Manual of Normal Neonatal Care, N.R.C. Robertson. Pp. xi + 240. Edward Arnold, London, Baltimore, Melbourne, Auckland, 1988. £7.95.

Protein C and Related Proteins, R.M. Bertina. Pp. x + 233. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, New York, Melbourne, 1988. £45.00.

Radiotherapy, Susan Holmes. Pp. 223. Austen Cornish Publishers, London, 1988. £6.50.