The range of unusual animals sold in Britain recently as pets includes douroucouli, agoutis, mynahs and caymans, apart from no less than six species of monkeys, four species of squirrels and three species of python.

The chapters are divided broadly into the types of animals kept as pets: carnivores, birds, rodents, non-human primates, ungulates, reptiles and amphibians, fish and other marine animals, and arthropods. Within each chapter are sections on, for example, injuries, allergy, viral diseases, bacterial diseases, fungal diseases, protozoan disease, helminthic diseases and arthropod parasites. Under each group of infections there are usually sections on epidemiology, the disease in man, the disease in animals, pathology, clinical manifestations, diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

Chapter 9 is a 42-page table, summarizing each organism, the mode of human infection, where it is recorded and the animals involved. The glossary and index maintain the same high standard of clarity which runs through the whole book.

Plant toxicity and dermatitis. A manual for physicians. K. F. LAMPE, PH.D. Professor of Pharmacology; R. FAGERSTROM, PHARM. DR. Baltimore. The Williams & Wilkins Company. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1968. Pp. x+231. Price £4 5s.

Adverse reactions due to contact with, or ingestion of, plants are not uncommon. Ranging from the extremes of a mild cutaneous eruption to a fatal outcome, the manifestations of plant toxicity are numerous. The authors of this book, although not medically qualified, have produced a work that is essentially clinical in character. Dealing with emergency and supportive care, the first chapter gives treatment guide-lines which are likely to be of most value to the physician inexperienced in the treatment of poisoning. Subsequent chapters deal, in turn, with plants that have specific toxic effects, for example, those that are gastro-enteric irritants, or produce cardiovascular disturbances, central nervous system disturbances, or other actions. Each chapter is illustrated with black and white line drawings of many of the plants concerned and a full description of each plant is given.

Despite the book's title, only the last chapter is concerned with plant dermatitis, which is dealt with in a general and superficial way. However, for the non-dermatologist this chapter gives a good introduction to the subject, and emphasizes the large number and wide variety of plants which are known to be involved in causing cutaneous reactions.

Since it is an American publication, the flora listed do not coincide with those of the United Kingdom although there is a considerable degree of overlap. In addition, American names are given for drugs and to British readers this may cause some irritation and possibly slight confusion.

These small criticisms hardly detract from a book which is well written and produced, and which will be of undoubted value to anyone interested in taking up the study of plant toxicity. For the more experienced physician it offers a useful source of information, as well as a guide to further reading, since each chapter is followed by a comprehensive list of references.

Organisers of voluntary services in hospitals. JAN ROCHA. London. King Edward's Hospital Fund. 1968. Pp. 100. Price 11s. 6d.

The need to harness and organize volunteers in the hospital service has been recognized. Hospitals are now appointing full-time paid organizers of volunteers. King Edwards Hospital Fund commissioned Mrs Jan Rocha, a social worker, to carry out a survey of the ways in which these organizers are appointed and carry out their work. Her report will be useful for hospital administrators.