

to be trivial nor so long as to be tedious and this happy balance is evenly preserved throughout.

Consideration of the commonplace is less likely to stimulate the imagination and every now and then an off-beat chapter achieves just this. Parathyroid hormones, the sustenance of spacemen and fluid equilibrium in the camel are all described thoughtfully and sometimes provocatively.

This is a bedside book for the research-minded doctor into which he may dip rewardingly. When he has completed it he will have the satisfied feeling that he has attended an extremely comprehensive postgraduate course. Sometimes he may feel frustrated, though, for he is not helped to follow a newly-aroused interest, through references to other work. The value of each paper would be enhanced if it were followed by a short guide to further reading, prepared by the author of the paper.

The second volume in a series, this edition is more robustly constructed than its predecessor. This is as well for it is destined to be much read.

The Maltreatment Syndrome in Children. VINCENT J. FONTANA, M.D., F.A.A.P. Springfield, Illinois, U.S.A. Charles C. Thomas. 1964. Pp. xv+67. Price \$5.00.

This book was published shortly before a paper in the *British Medical Journal* on the Battered Baby Syndrome (Brit. med. J. 1963, 2, 1558-61) drew our attention to the condition in this country. The trial of a man for the murder of his two very young children by repeatedly inflicted injuries has shocked many of us. The earlier death was certified as due to accident and suspicion directed to it only when the second occurred some months later. It is apparent that many cases pass unrecognized as results of parental cruelty for the history of accident is supplied when doctors are consulted, though parental concern is often strangely absent. Dr Fontana writes with humanity and with authority. He estimates the size of the problem in the U.S.A., which "may even rank with automobile accidents and the toxic infections encephalites as causes of typical disturbances of the central nervous system" (page 3), with a high death rate. The differential diagnosis and assessment of the social problem is discussed with an account of the law relative to succouring these children in his own country especially the difficulties at first involved in removing them for protective care.

Now that we are alerted in this country to the type of trauma that results, we have an added responsibility as family doctors to suspect injury inflicted by parents and to explore the social background through the available agencies. When our suspicion is aroused we must be prepared to give evidence when required. Still more important perhaps is our duty to secure preventive measures in cases of family unhappiness and social inadequacy before these young creatures suffer unduly. The multiplicity of injuries in some cases is often diagnostic and irreversible brain damage is only too frequent. Radiographs and photographs are distressingly illustrative. There is a list of references to publications from both sides of the Atlantic.