

Book Reviews

Emotional Care of the Facially Burned and Disfigured, by N. R. Bernstein, 1976. Published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston, U.S.A. 24 pp. Price in the U.K. £7.50.

This book is a sensitive and detailed study of the emotional effects of burns of the face written by an experienced psychiatrist at one of the leading burns treatment centres in the U.S.A. The traumatic effects of facial disfigurement on the sufferer, the community and those concerned with the care of patients are all explored. Detailed case histories are included, illustrating the different ways patients react to their disfigurement and different approaches to the problems of treatment. Concluding chapters are concerned with psychiatric care and rehabilitation, and the importance of a sustained integrated approach which combines understanding and sympathy with positive encouragement in adjusting to life in the community.

All this is of the highest relevance to workers in leprosy, for whom facial disfigurement is so much a matter of everyday experience that it is easy to forget how intense is the psychological trauma it creates in many of our patients. For all concerned with the treatment of sufferers from leprosy this book will be read with interest and profit.

T. F. DAVEY

The Challenge of Leprosy, by T. N. Jagadisan, (1977). Published by Kasturba Kushta Nivaran Nilayam, Malavanthangal P.O., via Kandachipuram, S.O. South Arcot District, PIN:605 701, S. India. 60 pp.

This book is a selection of articles and papers coming from the pen of Professor Jagadisan, and compiled at the suggestion of his friends. Anyone who knows T. N. Jagadisan, the story of his life and his great service to the cause of sufferers from leprosy will read this book with pleasure and affection for its author, who in a very personal concluding chapter tells of his own experience of leprosy and how he came to take up leprosy work.

This selection of his writings typifies the vision and deep compassion of the author. "An approach to rural leprosy work"; "A world within a world", "Rehabilitation of the physically handicapped with reference to leprosy"; "Physical and emotional problems in restoration of leprosy patients": in all these and other chapters he speaks with the authority of personal experience and with great felicity of language, qualities which give exceptional beauty to his study of Father Damien. His Presidential Address to the 12th All India Leprosy Workers' Conference is another example, not only of literary mastery but of that elevation of spirit which the experience of deep suffering has brought to a very remarkable man.

T. F. DAVEY

The Mycobacteria, by C. Ratledge. 1977. Shildon: Meadowfield Press Ltd. Pp. 130. £3.20 (paper-back).

Dr Ratledge has provided a series of cross-referenced critical reviews of various aspects of the mycobacteria, concentrating especially on work reported since 1960. The chapters discuss the diseases caused by mycobacteria and their immunology, taxonomy, structure and ultra-structure, metabolism, lipids, nucleic acids and genetics, and antimicrobial drugs. Though there

is some unevenness in the depth with which these subjects are treated, reflecting the particular interests of the author (and also of the reviewer), the whole is rather successful.

There are some disappointments. The chapter on metabolism is scanty, and contains no hint of the idea that fast- and slow-growing mycobacteria may have important metabolic differences. There are some curious statements about chemotherapy; it is implied that clofazimine is a more effective antileprosy drug than dapsone, and that it is applied direct to the skin of the patient; it is unlikely that cycloserine directly prevents the development of resistance to other anti-tuberculosis drugs. Considering the detailed treatment of the various modes of DNA transfer that occur in bacteria (few of which have been convincingly demonstrated in mycobacteria) it is surprising that the idea that drug-resistance arises by selection, rather than by any action of the drug to modify the bacterium, is not explained more clearly.

The treatment of the lipids is well done. The author has attempted to avoid the classical categories—waxes A, B, C and so on—and has instead classified mycobacterial lipids according to their structure. Taxonomy is well summarised, and structure interestingly dealt with (though it seems unlikely that many electron microscopists would now accept Imeda's structure of the mycobacterial wall).

The author seems not to have been too kindly treated by the publishers. The object of photographic typesetting from typescript is presumably rapid production—for this one has to put up with untidy right margins and unattractive typefaces. Yet production of the book has been so delayed that Dr Ratledge has been obliged to add a chapter on recent progress (since 1973). In some cases the recent work negates large sections of the original chapters, which the author should have had the opportunity to rewrite. This has, for example, made a considerable muddle of his own interesting and important work on iron-transport. One may only speculate on the purpose of the eccentric system of page-numbering.

The real mystery remains—for whom is this book intended? The preface lists a variety of potential readers, but the treatment seems too elaborate for students or clinicians not especially interested in mycobacterial diseases, but too superficial for a specialist in any of the fields covered. It would form a useful introduction to the field for research workers or clinicians proposing to involve themselves with mycobacteria, and is cheap enough for most to afford. They would be well advised not to believe all the reported information about the genus, which sometimes seems as much supported by ingenuity as by data.

P. DRAPER

The Pathogenesis of Infectious Disease. Cedric Mims. Academic Press. 1977. xii + 242 pp. £3.40 (paperbound).

The first question raised by this new addition to Monographs for Students of Medicine is why it was not written before. The answer, presumably, is that few people have made themselves as well versed as Professor Mims over such a broad field on the whole subject of infection—inflammation—immune response—pathogenesis of disease. The point of the book is that this vast topic is dealt with as a whole, in general terms. Diseases are used not as chapter headings but as examples to illustrate the stratagems evolved by invading organisms and their hosts to counter each others' defences at each stage of the sequence from contagion to recovery. Every type of micro-organism is dealt with, including a number that are primarily of veterinary importance. The author is particularly strong on viruses, but he gives many useful insights too into bacteria, fungi and protozoa, and the diseases caused by them. Obviously the subject is not dealt with in depth and the book is not intended to supplant conventional text-books. It is a synthesis of knowledge and ideas, and to pick holes in it would be to miss the point. There are holes, but the big ones are those due to deficiencies of present knowledge.

Aspects that will be of particular interest to leprologists will be mechanisms of entry of organisms to the body by different routes and methods of dissemination, the process of phagocytosis and digestion, the advantages and limitations of the intra-cellular and extra-cellular habitats, the pathogenesis of diseases other than leprosy in which the causative organism resides in neural tissue, and the addendum on vaccines.

The book is lucidly written and helpfully illustrated in a style that will be readily comprehended by students (if necessary with the aid of the glossary provided). Although, perhaps, students will be the chief beneficiaries there must be few specialists, teachers or research workers in this complicated field who will not enjoy, and gain from reading, such a comprehensive though fairly brief survey of the subject. It is a splendid concept, successfully executed. The book is moderately priced and highly recommended.

D. S. RIDLEY