physician of the plethora of congenital and metabolic problems encountered by his colleagues specialising in this aspect of gastroenterology.

This volume will be a valuable guide to the registrar in training as well as to the general physician wishing to keep abreast of developments in gastroenterology, while the specialist in the field will find the extensive references of considerable value. Altogether this is a well-balanced informative book and a valuable addition to any medical library.

R A PARKINS

Clinics in Gastroenterology (Vol. 9 No. 1) **Virus Hepatitis** Guest Editor: Sheila Sherlock DBE. (Pp. 228. Illustrated. £9.00.) W B Saunders: Eastbourne. 1980. This issue of the *Clinics* continues the high standard of its predecessors with a collection of 11 authoritative reviews on various aspects of viral hepatitis (strangely the volume is called *virus hepatitis*) by authors chiefly from the United Kingdom. There has been continuous progress in our knowledge of the hepatitis B virus since the Australian antigen was discovered in 1964 and now one major advance—namely, active immunisation—must be close. All aspects of hepatitis B are covered in five chapters, ranging from the now complex assay of serological markers associated with the virus to the association of hepatomata with carriage of the virus. Hepatitis A, and non-A non-B hepatitis are also fully described in separate chapters. Sadly, there is nothing on unusual causes of hepatitis in this country and abroad, such as glandular fever, yellow fever, herpes simplex, etc, which could have been substituted for a strangely out-of-place last chapter on four examples of drug-related hepatitis.

As so often, the histological figures are disappointing, but the book can be highly recommended.

R P H THOMPSON

Prostaglandins By D F Horrobin. (Pp. 391; £12.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1979.

This book covers many topics, including a factual account of prostaglandins with regard to the gut, and hypotheses on gastrointestinal diseases. However, these aspects comprise less than six pages, and this limits the interest from a purely gastroenterological viewpoint, although

sections such as prostaglandin biochemistry and measurement are obviously relevant to all disciplines. Other chapters include accounts of the actions of prostaglandins on the circulation, kidney, nervous system, eye, and respiration, and their roles in inflammation, metabolism, and cell function. In addition there are several chapters on prostaglandins and various diseases.

Dr Horrobin aimed to produce more than just an easy-to-read reference book. His stated goal was to stimulate, provoke or even infuriate others with his hypotheses, and to make various philosophical points. These include his view that ideas without much experimental evidence should be freely published, on the basis that even if they are wrong they will regardless lead to valuable work.

Dr Horrobin makes many hypotheses using interpretations of his own work which are often presented as facts. Only those readers conversant with the literature will know that the validity of many such interpretations is far from established. But perhaps some investigators will be directed into the 'right' research for what may be the 'wrong' reasons. So if you are looking for an account on prostaglandins and the gastrointestinal tract, this book will outline various areas and direct you to reviews and research papers. If you want a scientifically wide-ranging, somewhat racy, unconventional book, you will probably find this one stimulating, provoking, or even infuriating.

ALAN BENNETT

Reoperative Gastro-intestinal Surgery (Second edition) By Thomas Taylor White and R Cameron. (Pp. 331. Illustrated. \$44.25.) Little Brown: USA. 1980. Rescue surgery is the province of a particular type of surgeon, but this book will appeal to those who from time to time have to perform this form of surgery on their patients. It touches in several of the chapters on the avoidance of the problem but mostly assumes that it has happened.

The chapters are usually contributed by more than one author and are comprehensive—in some instances ever so, in that they appear almost to dredge up every conceivable complication. Yet the attention to detail sufficient to make the book informative in all areas is only true of the upper gastrointestinal sections. Two hundred and sixty five pages are devoted to oesophagus, stomach, duo-

denum, biliary tract, and pancreas, while only 40 are devoted to the small intestine and colon. In this respect the text might well have been called 'reoperative surgery in the upper gastro-intestinal tract.' The section on wound healing, admittedly a problem after repeated operations, adds little that is new in a text mainly concerned with surgical tactics in the critical choice of a salvage operation.

But the book is reasonably up to date in that it brings in the use of endoscopy as a means of investigating the post-surgical problem and mentions its use as an alternative to reoperating on, for example, the biliary tract; it is at its most authoritative when dealing with the stomach, biliary tract, and pancreas, where the experience of the senior authors is reflected in the text.

Each surgeon reading this book (which is a second edition) will experience a series of personal *déjà vu* phenomena at times. One wonders whether so many of these complications will happen in the lifetime of the next generation of surgeons as H₂ receptor antagonists and highly selective vagotomy and the like alter the surgical scene. Only time will tell. At the present time this book is a monument to the ingenuity of the surgeons who have devised such varied means of circumventing the perils into which their patients have, for better or worse, landed. The authors use a colloquial approach at times for what must have been a very difficult task and in which it is this reviewer's opinion they have been reasonably successful. A book both for consultation by those in training or for quick reference by others when all is not well surgically.

ADAM N SMITH

Books received

Advances in Psychosomatic Medicine: Vol 10: Psychotherapeutic Interventions in Life-Threatening Illness Edited by H Freyberger. (Pp. 206; illustrated; \$57.00) Karger, Basel. 1980.

Essays of an Information Scientist Vol. 1, 1962–73, Vol 2, 1974–76. By Eugene Garfield (Pp. 544 and 708; \$25.00) J P Press, Philadelphia, 1977.

Gastrointestinal Surgery Edited by J S Najarian and J P Delaney. (Pp. 775; illustrated; \$43.50). Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago. 1979.