this time on immunofluorescence in dermatology, with 96 references by W. Mitchell Sams, and continues under various headings to provide abstracts of papers which are considerably more detailed than the author's published summaries. Although broadly grouped, these may have little connection with those preceding or following, which makes for somewhat jerky reading. To each abstract, in small print, is added a few lines of editorial comment, usually of praise or of constructive criticism; this year these are more conspicuous, being printed on a grey background against the white pages of the normal text.

In previous years, the relative lack of venereology has been commented upon. On this occasion, there is only slight improvement; the 11½ pages devoted to the subject contain ten well done selected abstracts, all on syphilis or false positive serology, and eighteen listed papers recommended for additional reading. Of the 28 concerned, 10 were published in this journal. Gonorrhoea or its manifestations have no mention.

However, scattered through the book are papers relevant to the subject which are interesting and important. Under 'Drug Reactions' are the findings of the Boston Medical Centre indicating that the risk of ampicillin rash is particularly high in patients taking allopurinol and this drug or its underlying hyperuricaemia potentiates its allergenicity. Under 'Viruses and Viral Diseases' is a report of 15 per cent. of isolations of herpes virus Type II from the urethra, prostatic fluid or by superficial foreskin or deeper prostatic, testicular or vas deferens biopsies of 190 males with no history of genital herpes infection. Elsewhere, is described the successful use of the toxic anti-tumour antibiotic bleomycin in giant condylomata acuminatum. Also—reinforcing observations earlier made in North Africa—that an epidemic of acute glomerular nephritis in Trinidad was associated with an epidemic of scabies.

This attractively produced, concise, easy to read and well-illustrated book is a 'must' for dermatologists but, to provide the cover necessary for dermato-venereologists, its use should be supplemented by a subscription to the British Journal of Venereal Diseases. Venereologists already taking the journal can however, glean much valuable collateral information concerned with the companion specialties of dermatology, allergy, and immunology in the wider context of Medicine.

R. R. Willcox

Sexual Freedom and Venereal Disease. By R. S. MORTON. 1971. Pp. 141, 3 figs. Peter Owen London. (£2.75)

It may be considered unfair to an author to review, in the autumn of 1973, a book concerned with the sociological and behavioural background to the sexually-transmitted diseases which was published in 1971.

With regard to the title, the term sexually-transmitted diseases might have been preferred to venereal diseases, as the acquisition of one or other disease occurs purely by chance, while the behaviour, especially when promiscuous, is intentional.

The book opens with a very good historical review of the social background to the sexually-transmitted diseases, followed by a concise chapter about the commoner diseases. In the section on syphilis it can be calculated that, by division every 30 hours, an infecting dose of 1,000 treponemes would become about 131 millions in 3 weeks, rather than the 10 billion quoted on p.29. The chapter entitled 'Today's Social Dynamics' is a critique of the permissive society and most of the aspects are covered in a highly satisfactory manner. Certain points of view expressed are, at the least, debatable. Thus it is dangerous to assume, as the author does on p.74, that medico-social problems would improve if there was a period of economic stasis.

In the chapter entitled 'The Social Consequences of the Contraceptive Pill', Dr. Morton expresses somewhat Calvinistic views on the use of the contraceptive pill by the unmarried. Historically, the incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases was rising before the 'pill' became readily available, and this was certainly so in regard to the rise in the number of women with gonorrhoea in Sweden. As yet not enough women, or their male partners, are using the readily available contraceptive facilities. Until they do so illegitimacy will remain a problem causing more misery than do the sexually-transmitted diseases themselves. Undoubtedly, reliable contraceptive techniques, under the control of women themselves, has given them the same freedom in sex that men have always had. Why should we cavil against this? One cannot agree with the author's statement on p.91 that 'the accumulation of cases of long-term individual misery and venereal disease, as a direct result of its (the pill) use, is more calamitous than anything precipitated by thalidomide'.

Treatment, contact tracing, and education are considered in the chapter entitled 'Control', but no mention is made of the need for improved medical education. On p.97, the omission of the word 'reported' gives a wrong impression of the situation in the United States of America. While 1 in 4 of *reported* cases of gonorrhoea are dealt with privately, overall 70 per cent. of cases are so treated. Similarly, on p.107, the Public Health Advisors only interviewed *reported* cases of syphilis, again only a minority of such cases, and by 1973 it has become apparent that cluster testing had not proved the success it was hoped for.

Dr. Morton seems to favour the use of legal sanctions to 'contain' unco-operative, infectious patients until they are rendered non-infectious (p.106), but surely it stretches the imagination too far to try to link these very few people who refuse examination and possible treatment with the epidemic level of gonorrhoea. Should unco-operative patients prove a problem in any area, then the venereologist would be well advised to review his contact tracing procedures and personnel.

The final chapter, 'Where do we go from here?', is a broad survey of the various forces acting for and against disease control throughout the world. The author sets out the problems to be overcome, the gaps in our knowledge, the attitudes of administrators, universities, and politicians and the apathy of some members of the

medical profession. Dr. Morton ends on a note of warning, that social awareness of the deteriorating situation is needed if there is to be any improvement and strengthening of treatment facilities, recruitment of staff, and extensions in the use of all available techniques. Without this, and because of the failure to develop socio-political consciousness throughout society, the venereal diseases will become pandemic in Britain.

Despite the criticisms levelled, or tilted, at it, this is a stimulating book and will make interesting reading for all those concerned, in one way or another, in the management of sexually-transmitted diseases and by social scientists in general. Nevertheless, one wonders at what wider public the publishers have hoped to aim this book.

C. B. S. Schofield