chapters describe the speech, visual, auditory, cranial, cutaneous and visceral manifestations of hereditary metabolic neurological disease, and practical laboratory tests for their diagnosis.

This is not a book in which to find a single coherent account of a "one gene—one enzyme" defect. It is a reference volume to which the clinician can turn when faced with a particular diagnostic problem to seek guidance on diagnosis and investigation. I will continue to keep it by me and use it repeatedly until the next edition appears. No doubt, by then, the number of genetic disorders will have expanded even further, the tests available for their diagnosis will have multiplied, and my need for a volume such as this, will be even greater.

CD MARSDEN

1984 Year Book of Neurology & Neurosurgery. Edited by Russell N de Jong, Robert D Currier, Oscar Sugar. (Pp 452; £37.00.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1984.

A review of a book of reviews does not, of itself, make enthralling reading, but the publishers of this well-known Year Book are justifiably proud of their claim that it has been "published without interruption since 1902." It has always been a valuable source of reference, but in some years gone by it has been rather difficult to read, mainly because of attempts to include too much. Under the present editorship this has no longer been a defect, and yet still a very large number of articles of practical value from journals all over the world are condensed and then commented upon by the editors. As this is a very useful book for the clinician, these comments from fellow clinicians of great experience form one of the most absorbing features of the book, and even though Robert Currier admits that some papers selected might reflect a prejudice of interest, this is not obvious, and they do in fact cover a very wide spectrum of all branches of the neurosciences. The editor of the neurosurgical section comments in a somewhat different way summarising other publications past and present relevant to the paper under consideration and comparing conclusions drawn. In this way an even wider range of references is available.

A very attractive feature of the book is the introductions, both to the neurology and neurosurgery sections, in which the editors select particular conditions in which advances or changes have taken place since

the last edition, and also give information about the availability of drugs or therapeutic methods which have recently been developed (with some critical comments about some of them). The neurosurgical introduction is followed by seven pages entitled "brief interesting notes" which is exactly what they are, adding the meat of a good number of further papers not dealt with in more detail later.

This is a book for the practising clinician to browse through in any order he likes. It is the sort of thing one can read with value in those odd five minute gaps in one's commitments, but it is very hard then to put it down after so short a stint.

EDWIN R BICKERSTAFF

Dizziness, Hearing Loss, and Tinnitus: The Essentials of Neurotology. By Robert W Baloh. (Pp 197; \$43.75.) Philadelphia: FA Davis Co, 1984.

This book comes from an illustrious department under the eminent authorship of Dr Baloh, and is furnished with a highly complimentary foreword by no less an authority than Dr Schuknecht. It is with regret and some trepidation that I find myself unable to accept this unreserved appraisal; for, unhappily, I do not feel that the work does justice to its origins. The failures arise from problems of size and balance. Neurotology is a big, difficult, and often poorly understood subject. Here encapsulated in under 200 pages is an attempt to present the whole of this topic at levels appropriate for practising physicians, students and residents. Within such rigorous constraints of size a delicate balance is critical, and it is in the lack of appropriate emphasis and the unnecessary stress on the unimportant and the recondite that the deficiencies lie.

In order to simplify and abbreviate, many fundamentals are dealt with too briefly. One could cite the comments about the Coriolis effect in the section on physics, the brevity of the section devoted to the causes of sensorineural hearing loss, and from a practical point of view the description of electro-nystagmography. There is here no discussion of the respective merits of AC or DC machines and far too brief a description to allow the putative practitioner to copy. The problems of emphasis are perhaps no more forcefully demonstrated by the fact that one page alone is devoted to Meniere's disease, while equal weight is given to migraine and to the rare Cogan's syndrome. Where space is at such

a premium it is odd to find that important subjects are treated with parsimony—ten lines for multiple sclerosis—while spaces provided for comment on such irrelevant topics as tumours of the external auditory meatus. A brisk gallop through congenital abnormalities leaves only a scent of the subject behind. The ordering and classification is a little difficult to understand. Why does Bell's palsy appear sandwiched between ototoxicity and multiple sclerosis? What is the rationale for this classification?—not anatomical—not related to central or peripheral disease—not symptomatic—not aetiological. Sacculotomy is discussed under the heading of Meniere's disease—three lines only for this important and controversial topic—while labyrinthectomy and vestibular neurectomy, which one would expect to find in the same chapter erupt irrelevantly forty pages later. Dr Schuknecht is quite right to commend the very useful bibliography and attributions, which are found throughout the work, and the text is indeed well written.

No blame to the author but the typography is ugly—big, bold and brash. Heavy and ungracious, its unfortunate design especially mars the legibility of the "contents".

HAROLD LUDMAN

The Practical Management of Head Injuries (4th Ed). By John M Potter assisted by Michael Briggs. (Pp 100; £5.00.) London: Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd, 1984.

The book is directed primarily at those working in casualty departments in district hospitals and in my view should be compulsory reading for anyone who has responsibility for the care of head injuries. This book, small enough to fit into a pocket and short enough to read in a single sitting, has stood the test of time as a thoroughly practical and realistic guide to the care of head injuries. The first edition appeared in 1961 and ten years have elapsed since the last revision in 1974. The format remains the same with good reason for the basic principles of management have not altered though refinements have taken place.

Following a short introduction the book is divided into sections which describe the various stages through which the patient must pass pointing out those features which affect outcome and what the doctor must do to ensure that the patient makes the best possible recovery. The emphasis is on