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 are 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. Success surgery 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

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the simple measures which are all feasible in any general hospital. This includes obtaining the best history of the accident, the circumstances and any changes in the patients condition before arrival at hospital, immediate and adequate first aid, accurate assessment of subsequent changes particularly the level of responsiveness now objectively measured using the Glasgow Coma Scale which is well described in this edition. The complications which demand surgery are clearly identified and the degree of urgency explicitly stated.

The section on traumatic neurosis and the post-concussional state has been rewritten and made these complicated and difficult conditions almost intelligible. There are a number of other small alterations most of which bring the text up to date in line with contemporary practice—for instance echo-encephalography is demoted and CT scanning which may be a reason for referring more patients to a special unit if progress is not satisfactory is briefly mentioned. Controversial treatments such as artificial ventilation for head injury alone (as opposed to those with both head and chest trauma) is not discussed. Small as the book is, the content, presentation and style make it worth all of the five pounds demanded for its purchase.

JOHN R BARTLETT

Neurology for the House Officer (3rd Ed). By Howard L Weiner and Lawrence P Levitt. (Pp 204; £6.75.) Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1983.

The authors describe this as a "problem oriented" guide which gives advice about common neurological upsets encountered by house officers in training. It is written for American students, interns and residents. The contents are a mixture with chapters based on signs such as "right and left hemiplegia, and hyperreflexia and hyporeflexia" and those based on more conventional symptoms such as "stroke, headache, dementia, seizures". There are useful chapters on the "neurology of alcoholism, and of diabetes," and "malignancy and the nervous system". Many helpful comments appear which may aid recognition of important symptoms and signs and there is also practical advice on the management of certain disorders.

The soft cover and small size enable it to be kept in the pocket although the print which looks like typescript is disappointing. In the assessment of coma there is no mention of the gag or cough reflexes. There is

no emphasis on potential life-threatening neurological emergencies with bulbar or respiratory failure as in myasthenia gravis or tetanus. There are also some irritating points. Phenobarbitone is not the first drug to be used in children with epileptic seizures. The page numbers of the index show errors, for example medial longitudinal fasciculus, myasthenia gravis.

Overall I am sure it will continue to be popular for its intended American audience, and the presence of a third edition supports this. I suspect the demand in this country will not be great.

T FOWLER

Neurologic Emergencies in Infancy and Childhood. Edited by John M Pellock & Edwin C Myer. (Pp 418; £30.00.) London: Harper & Row Ltd, 1984.

This multi-author book covers the major fields of acute neurology and fills a much needed gap. It contains particularly good chapters on increased intracranial pressure by Professor Miller and by Nicol and Ward (and Mickell and Ward), and a very useful discussion of the diagnosis and management of coma in childhood. In addition new born problems, trauma, acute encephalopathies, poisoning, epilepsy, vascular disease, infections and neuromuscular and neuro-ophthalmological disorders are dealt with. This book is certainly to be recommended as providing a very useful starting point for the management of acute neurological disorders and very well selected references.

It is important that the correct preparation of isosorbide used in the management of raised intracranial pressure is given.

It is very much a book written from a neurologist's point of view and fails to recognise that a lot of acute neurological disorders occur in children with major cardiac, renal or other metabolic disease, very often in the postoperative period. This imposes specific problems of both investigation and treatment which deserve full discussion.

There is a tendency to cover the field generally and to limit discussion on the problems which are really difficult. This is particularly apparent when the place and timing of invasive investigation and treatment of focal encephalitis is being considered. I wonder if they could not assume a general understanding of the management of many problems which are common paediatric ones and focus on the areas which require discussion, like, for example,

the place of biopsy in the diagnosis of herpes simplex encephalitis.

The book could be shortened considerably by all authors, recognising a common line of management for coma, raised intracranial pressure and epilepsy and merely referring to that and adding specifics relevant to the particular cause of the problem. I think also the specific investigatory chapters at the end could have been included as part of the major text.

Although there is a chapter on ophthalmological emergencies the methods of testing vision in young children are not delineated and assessment of vision, in for example, children with shunt failure is not mentioned. The relief from this somewhat pure neurological line is given by John Freeman, in a chapter on myelodysplasia which recognises that emergencies can sometimes occur in previously handicapped children which may modify both assessment and therapy. A short discussion of acute presentations of genetically determined progressive disease would be useful and of the specific acute neurological problems that occur in association with congenital heart disease. If space was saved, it might also be nice to include a short chapter on the acute psychiatric presentations on organic brain disease and on the full range of acute hysterical disorders.

This book certainly deserves success and to go into further editions, and could, with modification become one of the most useful text books of paediatrics available.

BGR NEVILLE

Eating and Its Disorders (Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Disease, Volume 62). Edited by Albert J Stunkard and Eliot Stellar. (Pp 302; \$56.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1983.

This book contains a series of reviews on the control of eating behaviour and body weight, as well as a section on the treatment of eating disorders. The first third of the book is devoted to basic physiology: central nervous mechanisms, neurotransmitters and gut hormones, and the pharmacology of eating and hunger. The second third of the book deals with various theories on the regulation of body weight and their relevance in the genesis of obesity. The last section is concerned with clinical aspects of obesity, anorexia nervosa and bulimia, with an emphasis on their treatment.

The editors have brought together a team of experts, mainly from the United