Book reviews

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