Edited by Alfred White Franklin and Sandhya Naidoo. (Pp. x + 124; £1.05.) Invalid Children's Aid Association: London.

The Word Blind Centre for Dyslexic Children has enjoyed considerable publicity since it was established in 1963. The newspapers blossomed with accounts of undiagnosed dyslexics and increasing pressure was brought upon neurologists, educationists, and psychologists to provide facilities for the assessment and training of dyslexic children. There was an inevitable reaction to this popular outcry and professional attitudes polarized into enthusiastic belief or scepticism. In spite of a lessening of emotional tensions, misunderstandings still occur.

In response to a request from teachers, a series of lectures on dyslexia was given by the staff of the Word Blind Centre in 1969, and they have been made available in this short book. The lectures cover the problems of diagnosis, assessment, and psychological testing, and then discuss in practical detail some of the methods of training these disabled children. It is now generally accepted that true dyslexia is a relatively uncommon condition. There are thus few remedial teachers who have a sufficiently wide experience to choose the most appropriate form of treatment for these children, who present with a range of difficulties and aptitudes. These lectures provide a lively account of current methods based on first-hand experience.

IVAN T. DRAPER

NEUROLOGY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD By Anatole Dekaban. (Pp. xvii + 488; illustrated; £11.50.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1970.

There are a number of books on paediatric neurology in this format: 450-500 pages; attractively produced, with excellent illustrations—and all expensive. *Neurology of Early Childhood* is an expanded version of Dr. Dekaban's *Neurology of Infancy* and now includes child development and disease occurring up to school age. Limitations according to age are largely artificial; the exclusion of the diseases of adolescence from the sphere of paediatrics means that the infrequent occurrence of such diseases in childhood goes largely unrecognized. An exception to this rule is Huntington's chorea, which gets a generous allowance in several paediatric texts.

Neurology of Early Childhood gives an excellent review of developmental anatomy and physiology and there is a well-presented account of the maturation of the electroencephalograph. The description of the neurological examination and its interpretation is brief and orthodox. However, this section exemplifies the problems of a medium-sized textbook. For the beginner it is insufficiently detailed to be instructive, and for the expert it is scarcely necessary.

Those chapters devoted to disease states contain particularly good descriptions of the clinical disorders. The methods for reaching the correct diagnosis are less satisfactory. Almost without exception, the diseases are classified according to the underlying pathology, and the clinical presentation is considered secondarily. Thus, a child will present with the symptoms or peripheral neuropathy, yet this clinical syndrome does not warrant

a separate entry in the text. Reference to the index produces 'Polyneuropathy, lead' or 'Neuropathies, Hereditary, Charcot-Marie-Tooth type, and Dejerine-Sottas type'. For a description of the neuropathies of deficiency, metabolic disorders, toxic conditions, and so on, the student requires a knowledge of all the possible primary conditions before the appropriate entry can be found.

In an effort to avoid dogmatism some of the advice is irritatingly imprecise. When discussing the prolonged use of anticonvulsants for the treatment of febrile convulsions Dr. Dekaban states that 'the decision should be made on the merits of the individual patient'. While one agrees with this wholeheartedly, the inexperienced clinician is looking for assistance on this very point. In the important chapter on epilepsy there is a valuable description of the variations in seizures at different stages of a child's development. There is little about the pathophysiology of epilepsy and the EEG records which illustrate this chapter are reproduced without any indication of the montages.

In spite of the occasional lapse when the child is referred to as 'the organism', this is a humane approach to neurology. The format is reminiscent of an old-fashioned museum, where rank upon rank of material is available although the user needs to know what he is looking for. It is a well-documented catalogue of the common and rare neurological conditions. As such, it is a useful aide-mémoire, but it is of less practical value to the beginner in paediatric neurology.

IVAN T. DRAPER

DRUGS: DEVELOPMENT AND USE *British Medical Bulletin* 26, No. 3. (Pp. 185-266; £2.) British Council: London. 1970.

Whenever a doctor prescribes a potent drug his patient runs a risk which was negligible when pharmaceuticals had little pharmacological action. The anxiety and responsibility is increased a thousandfold when the substance has rarely if ever been given to a human being. No trials on animals can entirely eliminate the possibility of a uniquely human response especially psychological or in the special senses and the nightmares of teratogenesis or carcinogenesis are ever present. And yet animal studies may deprive us of valuable drugs. Aspirin and phenobarbitone might well have been excluded if subjected to modern screening.

This valuable number of the *British Medical Bulletin*, edited by Professor D. R. Laurence, presents the dilemma with unusual lucidity. The papers by well-known experts in clinical, epidemiological, and industrial pharmacology should be read carefully by all who take part in clinical trials. And every prescription of a new drug is a clinical trial.

J. A. SIMPSON

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS AND DYSFUNCTIONS OF THE BASAL GANGLIA A Multidisciplinary Workshop. Edited by G. E. Crane and R. Gardner, Jr. (Pp. x + 179; illustrated; \$1.75.) Public Health Service Publication No. 1938. U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C. 1969.

This little book, No. 3 of the Workshop Series of Phar-