

The value of Frenzel's glasses in this situation is particularly worthy of note, since the nystagmus in question is typically rotational in character and cannot on this account be revealed electronystagmographically.

The condition is a notoriously distressing one and its diagnosis is therefore a matter of much importance (Harrison, 1966). The occurrence of the nystagmus needs to be observed and for this, as shown, Frenzel's glasses may be of unique value.

The authors would like to acknowledge with thanks the help and encouragement they have received from C. S. Hallpike, FRS.

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## The April 1971 Issue

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sclerosing panencephalitis. But these are minor criticisms, and the book deserves to be on the shelves of any practising clinician whatever his specialty. It has been warmly welcomed by our own Department of Health, and is remarkably good value for money.

EDWIN R. BICKERSTAFF

LE SYNDROME DE GUILLAIN ET BARRÉ By Jean Cambier and Pascal Brunet. (Pp. 115; illustrated; price not stated). Ballière: Paris. 1970.

*Les Cahiers Ballière* comprise paperback monographs on a variety of medical topics. This volume on the Guillain-Barré syndrome provides an up-to-date and authoritative statement of present views on the disorder and gives a comprehensive review of past and recent literature.

One of the difficulties that has repeatedly arisen in discussions of this disorder is the precise delineation of the syndrome. Until more is known about the pathogenesis, a certain amount of arbitrariness must be involved. Thus, not all authorities would agree to the inclusion of cases in which there is an associated encephalitis with behavioural changes or cerebellar deficit, or an accompanying myelitis. The status of subacute or chronic cases that otherwise resemble the acute form is also uncertain. But recent years have witnessed significant advances in knowledge, particularly with regard to the pathological changes, by demonstrating the close morphological similarity between the Guillain-Barré syndrome and experimental allergic neuritis. The present review is, therefore, timely.

P. K. THOMAS

THE ORTHOPAEDIC MANAGEMENT OF SPINA BIFIDA CYSTICA

By Malcom B. Menelaus (Pp. 116; 116 figures; 33 tables; £3.00) Livingstone: Edinburgh.

Malcom Menelaus, a Melbourne surgeon with experience of treating over 400 children with spina bifida, has produced a timely monograph of a very high standard offering much information on this difficult subject and showing a fine balance of judgment in the many conflicting problems these children present.

Spina bifida has certain similarities to poliomyelitis but the muscle paralyses are in more regular patterns, the level of segmental involvement can be diagnosed from the posture of the children's limbs. Perhaps more should have been made of this very important understanding that we now have of the patterns of muscle paralysis and the resulting limb deformities arising from muscle imbalance in spina bifida. The orthopaedic management of deformity in these children is likely to be most effective in the early transfer of muscles to overcome deforming muscle imbalance—for example, transfer of the psoas, the cause of hip flexion deformity and dislocation when its opposing muscle, gluteus maximus (with sacral innervation), is totally paralysed. In poliomyelitis the orthopaedic surgeon had reached the stage of preventive surgery by his understanding of the causation of deformity and thus often avoided the more destructive surgery of cure of established deformities. Prophylactic surgical intervention has been earlier achieved in the

care of spina bifida children because of our previous knowledge.

Much of the difficulties of spina bifida and many of the perplexities of deformity have now been elucidated by the concept of 'the isolated cord segment' causing upper motor neurone paralysis distal to the spina bifida lesion, so well worked out by Ingram and Stark. It would have been also valuable to have developed further the discussion of this.

The best of a very good book is an appendix on advice to parents of children with spina bifida. This is an outstanding contribution and might be emulated by those who care for children with cerebral palsy and many other crippling diseases.

This monograph, which gives an up-to-date and balanced view of the problems of children with spina bifida, is essential reading for anyone concerned in their care.

J. I. P. JAMES

PSYCHIATRIC EPIDEMIOLOGY: an international symposium. Edited by E. H. Hare and J. K. Wing. (Pp. xvi + 379; illustrated; £4). Oxford University—for Nuffield. 1970.

The epidemiological approach has provided one of the most fruitful ways of testing hypotheses concerning mental illness. Latterly it has also been put to good practical use in the evaluation and planning of psychiatric services. Unfortunately, much of the invaluable information collected has been scattered in publications not readily available to the non-specialist reader. This book, a well-edited version of a symposium held under the joint auspices of the World Psychiatric Association and the Royal Medico-Psychological Association in 1969, provides a useful service by bringing together much important data and pointing to some of the main lines of development in the past 10 years. It starts with a very thoughtful and challenging contribution by Mechanic and includes important sections on the standardization of clinical assessment and diagnosis, the use of case-registers and on psychiatric epidemiology in relation to general practice. Of particular interest is a much condensed version of Hagnell's work on the incidence and duration of episodes of mental illness in a total population. This study, which is based on the now legendary Lund survey started by Essen-Möller in 1947, demonstrates, among other things, the episodic nature of manifestations of neurotic illness.

The large contribution by British workers bears witness to the wisdom of the policy which in the 1950s led the Medical Research Council to concentrate a good deal of its resources in this area.

Altogether an excellent volume produced with exemplary speed. It deserves to have the widest circulation among psychiatrists of every kind.

REYMOND LÉVY

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES OF TRAFFIC MEDICINE, CLINICAL TOXICOLOGY, AND DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION (including some neurological aspects) 11-16 September 1972, Paris. Details from Dr. de Kearney, Institut de Médecine du Trafic, Faculté de Médecine, 15, rue de l'Ecole-de-Médecine, 75-Paris 6e, France.