

Book reviews

BROCK'S INJURIES OF THE BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD AND THEIR COVERINGS Edited by Emanuel H. Feiring. (Pp. 962; illustrated; \$28.50.) Springer: New York, 1974.

That no reader should be without this book is a reviewer's cliché. For once, it is the only possible conclusion. The immediate and late effects of injuries of the brain and spinal cord constitute an inflationary part of the work of neurologists, neurosurgeons, and psychiatrists alike. Previous editions of this standard work have been the standby of consultants in these specialties, not least for medico-legal work. The new fifth edition appears 14 years after the fourth. It has been extensively revised by a distinguished international team of experts, though the bibliographies following each chapter indicate that some contributors have been more thorough than others. New subjects include metabolic alterations and injuries during infancy and childhood, brain injuries in boxers, and an expansion of the sections on spinal cord trauma. Without question this edition will repeat the success of earlier editions.

J. A. SIMPSON

KLINISCHE NEUROLOGIE By O. Hallen. (Pp. 306; illustrated; DM16.80; \$6.80.) Springer: Berlin, 1973.

Designed not as a weighty contribution but as a pocket-book (No. 118 of a Heidelberg series), it aims at an audience from students to the writers of theses. There are 200 short sections, in three groups: symptoms and signs, syndromes, and nosography. Special investigations are included and it is not surprising that this short text is bursting with data. Indeed, nothing seems to have been omitted, and there is little attempt to correlate frequency or importance with size of entry. Thus the Guillain-Barré syndrome just features in two tables, while neurosyphilis gets eight pages. Fourteen brain-stem syndromes are listed from Weber to Wallenberg. Eponyms abound, often spelled incorrectly ('Thompson' heads the section on myotonia congenita). Dickens is credited with authorship of *The Pickwickers*, and 'Looping III' is one of many misprints.

On the practical side, I was surprised to read that patients with raised intracranial pressure lay with their legs crossed, that radiotherapy was still thought

useful in herpes zoster and in syringomyelia (but not so surgery in the latter); that mercury inunctions and hydrogen peroxide helped MS, although he agrees with the author's scepticism about corticosteroids, but not with his gloomy prognosis.

The section on speech disorders is excellent but there must surely be other reasons for inability to repeat 'Karlsruher Bundesverfassungsgerichtshof' than incipient dysphasia.

E. H. JELLINEK

NEUROLOGY OF CHILDHOOD LEARNING DISORDERS By R. J. Schain. (Pp. 144; illustrated; £4.25.) Churchill, Livingstone: Edinburgh, 1972.

This soft covered book of less than 150 pages presents an admirable summary of the modern view of the learning disorders. Unlike so many similar accounts, and particularly those emanating from America, this one is strikingly free from neologisms and the idiosyncratic use of everyday terms.

Dr Schain defines the task facing the physician to whom children with school failure are referred. To the satisfaction of the teacher and parent he must try to distinguish between neurological disease, behavioural upsets, and faulty or inadequate teaching as a cause of academic failure.

In 14 short chapters he discusses the main categories of cerebral dysfunction which may result in a failure to learn. The various conditions are briefly defined and their significance is well summarized. It is not set out to be a textbook of paediatric neurology. It is an excellent introduction to, and a summary of, the relationship between neurological disorder and a failure to learn and as such it will be of value to paediatricians and doctors elsewhere whose work impinges upon this important and interesting topic.

IVAN T. DRAPER

NOTICE

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PAEDIATRIC NEURO-SURGERY Annual meeting, London, 13, 14 September 1974. Details from Kenneth Till, The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London WC1N 3JH.