A. SIMPSON

NEUROLOGY SERIES/SCHRIFtenREIHE NEUROLOGIE

The powers of recovery, the resilience of the infantile and adolescent brain after trauma are remarkable. This fact is underlined by this investigation.

Two hundred and forty patients varying in ages from 0–20 years were meticulously clinically investigated during a five year period of hospital admissions. These investigations were repeatedly undertaken as were electroencephalographic studies. Nearly a third of the book deals with electroencephalographic appearances and the abnormalities are exhaustively discussed.

As in all similar series the mildly injured far outweighed the more severe cases. Ninety-three had not been unconscious at all and a further 104 had been unconscious for less than an hour. This left 43 more severely injured patients of whom 20 were added to the 220 who, strictly speaking, belonged to the five year material. Patients were selected for the purpose of this investigation out of a total of 503 admitted head injuries if their EEG and its subsequent changes indicated the presence of cerebral trauma. This method of selection appears to me unsatisfactory and may explain why the investigators found such a very high number (32.5%) of cerebral abnormalities preceding the trauma in their material (mental deficiencies, epileptics, and cerebral palsies).

The series is well documented and if it produces no startling new insights it is not the fault of the painstaking researchers in this well-ploughed field.

J. SCHORSTEIN


This book from Brisbane is divided into three main sections. Part 1 is concerned with basic principles of clinical pharmacology, the measurement of plasma levels of drugs and anticonvulsant therapy in general. Part 2 deals with the pharmacology of individual anticonvulsants, and Part 3 with how they should be used. There are about 25 pages of references at the end of the book which is completed by a useful index.

The authors point out that the clinical pharmacological approach to the treatment of epilepsy is rapidly becoming integrated into routine management in everyday clinical practice. They feel, therefore, that there is room for a book which considers the treatment of epilepsy in this light, and which sets out the principles of clinical pharmacology in a form tailored to the needs of the practising clinician. The authors are well-qualified for their task, and the book will repay careful reading.

The pharmacology of anticonvulstant drugs is described in considerable detail, as is now becoming the custom in books concerned with the treatment of epilepsy. This has become necessary with the immense growth of knowledge in this field, and the time has also come when one of it, at least, can be put into practice. The busy physician may find all this somewhat daunting, but at least he should find it a stimulus to strive towards the better use of anticonvulstant drugs, and in this respect this book will be of much assistance.

MAURICE PARSONAGE


That the damaged central nervous system is incapable of useful regeneration and that the interneuronal connections laid down during development cannot be influenced by the environment are shibboleths which engender a feeling of resignation and hopelessness in the clinician. Though prepared to accept a vague concept of plasticity in young brains, most doctors are sceptical that physical forms of therapy can influence the functioning pattern of the damaged nervous system. Are these widely held beliefs justified? This interesting issue gathers together the recent advances in knowledge of development and regeneration at neuronal, synaptic, and glial levels. It is now unquestionable that growth can be modified by environmental factors including sensory input and nutrition and that regeneration of axons, synapses and myelin does occur. If the resulting recovery is negligible in clinical terms is it necessary to leave the matter there? A very interesting paper reviews the possibility that regrowth is arrested by a local immunobiological mechanism which could, in principle, be modified hormonally. The interaction between glia and neurones and the effect of distal section of an axon on the capacity of its neurone to accept bouton contact should be known to neuro-

The recent surge of knowledge about disorders of peripheral nerves has slowed down, and the time is opportune for a reasonably sized book to orientate the non-specialist. Professor Bradley has written an excellent one which will be helpful to all who require a systematic review of the subject from historical, structural, clinical, and investigative points of view. General physicians have usually diagnosed 'peripheral neuritis' before asking advice from a neurologist and usually appear to be disappointed when given a long list of possible causes. Frustration is increased by the aetiological blindness of electrophysiology and, to a great extent, histology. The subtle clinical distinctions which sometimes aid the educated guess are to be found by careful study of this book but might have received more emphasis.

The section on electrophysiology is adequate for its purpose but the account of H waves and F waves must be reconsidered in the next edition. Pathology is well-illustrated, notably by good line drawings. Blood-nerve barrier is briefly described but perhaps given less emphasis than required. An allocation of two chapters to diseases of anterior horn cells and myopathies seems unnecessarily generous in a book on peripheral nerves. But these are minor criticisms of an excellent book which is sure to be welcomed.

J. A. SIMPSON

BOOKS RECEIVED


NEW PERSPECTIVES IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT Edited by Brian Foss. (Pp. 266; illustrated; £1.00.) Penguin: Harmondsworth. 1974.


CORRECTION

The title of the book Neurology Series, reviewed on p. 415 of the April issue was incomplete and should have read Neurology Series/Schriftenreihe Neurologie: Das Hirntrauma im Kindes- und Jugendalter. By H. Lange-Cosack and G. Tepfer.