

including heredity, diagnosis, electroencephalography, precipitating factors, general management, drug, dietary and surgical treatment, intellectual and behavioural disturbances, socio-economic and legal consequences (it is a crime for epileptics to marry in some of the United States) and so on. It is written by an expert with 26 years' experience who has made an 'intimate' follow-up study of about 15,000 patients. One thing is clear; if the book is read by only a small proportion of epileptic patients in the U.S.A. it will have to be bought by almost every American doctor.

**Die gedeckten Schaden des Gehirns.** Experimentelle Untersuchungen mit einmaliger, wiederholter und gehäufte stumpfer Gewalte in Wirkung auf den Schädel. By FRIEDRICH UNTERHARNSCHEIDT. (Pp. vi + 124; 67 figures. DM. 48.) Berlin, Göttingen, Heidelberg: Springer, Verlag. 1963.

A rapid increase in the accident rate in recent years has stimulated a great deal of interest in the factors playing a part in the production of cerebral lesions following trauma to the head. This monograph describes the results of experiments on 13 rabbits and 46 cats using a concussion gun to produce single or repeated impacts on the skull at velocities ranging from 7.1 to 18.3 m./sec. Both clinical and pathological effects are discussed, and it is of considerable interest that repeated insults at low velocities produced morphological changes due to vascular disturbances even in the absence of primary traumatic changes. A single impact sufficient to produce unconsciousness did not produce any recognizable changes. Convulsions were also seen particularly amongst the rabbits, and reversible paraparesis could be produced by five impacts at a velocity of 7.1 m./sec. The direction of the impact was also found to be significant.

The booklet should be of interest to those dealing with head injuries as well as to the neurologist who wonders why some of his epileptic patients deteriorate after repeated falls. It could also provide excellent ammunition for those actively engaged in attempts to abolish boxing. It is well produced, but at the price of DM. 48 is unlikely to find its way into many private libraries.

**Kinderpsychiatrie in der Praxis. Postgraduate Courses in Pediatrics.** Edited by E. ROSSI. Vol. 9: (Pp. ii + 86. S.Fr./DM. 12.) Basel and New York: S. Karger. 1963.

Child psychiatry in practice is the title of volume 9 of the Postgraduate Courses in Pediatrics. In seven lectures one German and six Swiss child psychiatrists attempt to draft for the practising paediatrician a rough outline of the main problems occupying child psychiatry. They have undertaken an extremely difficult task, and the result is not entirely satisfactory; partly because they lose themselves in commonplace generalizations as in the chapter on the treatment of mental deficiency, or in minutiae of therapeutic ritual in the section on the treatment of psychogenic disturbances in childhood by the practitioner.

It is also hardly justifiable, at our present state of knowledge or rather ignorance, to recommend prolonged administration of spasmolytic or sympathomimetic drugs as curative measures in enuresis.

Interesting is Stutte's view that autism is an entity separate from the general pattern of childhood schizophrenia, and which he regards as a 'constitutional abnormality of the child personality but not as a disease process.' His contribution on psychoses in childhood provides, to the uninitiated, a useful outline of the clinical pictures involved, as do the case notes of 'a psychiatrist in a children's hospital' by Gertrude Sauter.

Hardly any attention is paid to the large borderland between paediatrics and child psychiatry, namely the psychosomatic disorders in childhood, where close co-operation between paediatrician and child psychiatrist is likely to be most fruitful.

This little volume is a brave venture but not a very successful one.

**Pathologische Anatomie und Dynamik. Der Plötzliche Kindstod.** By G. MÜLLER and E. LETTERER. (Pp. viii + 145; 55 figures + 12 tables. DM. 29.70). Stuttgart: Georg Thieme. 1963.

This monograph is a readable and clear account of the histopathological findings in 98 children who died either suddenly or unexpectedly after an apparently mild illness of not more than 48 hours. Perinatal deaths are not included. The author confirms the findings of several recent investigators that clinically unimpressive infections of the respiratory tract account for well over half of all these deaths. The observation that there is a marked November to April peak, and that infants under 6 months are the most frequent victims, is confirmed. Nutritional and socio-economic factors appear to be of little significance, whereas lack of maternal experience (mothers aged less than 25 years) was found to be important in the statistical evaluation of the case material.

Cellular changes in the lymphoid tissues, both in the children studied and in experimental animals, lead the author to postulate virus infections as being largely responsible for these deaths. Acute adrenocortical failure, the result of 'stress', is thought to be important. The author confirms that, following a 'stress' situation, a profound and rapid electrolyte disturbance can occur. This in turn is thought to be responsible for the almost constant finding of gross cerebral oedema—the actual cause of death.

Not unexpectedly the mechanics and dynamics of 'stress' are no more clear now than in the days of Selye. The causation of the fatal cerebral oedema also remains more or less a mystery.

The book is well produced on glossy paper and the photomicrographs, both black and white and coloured, are good. There is a truly impressive and commendably international bibliography. Though the author is perhaps a little too concerned with the semantics of 'sudden' as opposed to 'unexpected' death, the book deserves to be widely read.