Book Reviews

hand, though apparently 36 children in the sample had catastrophic rage bursts as a prominent feature, this is considered to be a peculiar general biological reaction of an intermittent kind to frustrating situations in brain-damaged people, rather than a peculiarity of 'temporal lobe epilepsy'.

'Many of the children in this sample were academic failures in spite of good intelligence.' This appears to be a very interesting point, and it is somewhat tantalizing that very little further information may be found in the rest of the book on this subject. It is interesting, however, that the authors state that intelligence as measured by tests was a poor predictor of schooling success and work record. Amongst the 100 cases, in the 12th chapter, it is mentioned that only two patients had a disorder which was probably genetically determined (phenylketonuria in one case and tuberose sclerosis in the other). It is difficult to understand how, in these cases for example, the evidence of 'temporal lobe epilepsy' was reached. However, it is very interesting to note on page 125 that 'one third of all children who develop temporal lobe epilepsy seem to derive their lesions from severe febrile convulsions occurring in early life'. If this statement is confirmed by other well-documented series of children, it would change considerably the paediatrician's view of 'febrile convulsions'. However, it all depends on what one calls 'febrile convulsions'.

This nice little book, with the occasional quotation from Hippocrates, or Ovid, is completed by 24 pages of references (with many notable omissions including those of Penfield and Jasper's book, of Gastaut, and, in this country, the early work of Hill, of Falconer, of Margerison and others). A useful index of 5 pages completes this elegantly produced book which the reviewer found extremely clear in the printing and illustrations. At the end of the book the reader might wonder why the term 'temporal lobe' should have been included in the title of this book, rather than omitting it altogether and calling it 'Biological Factors in 100 Patients with Epilepsy'.

The Motor Deficit in Patients with Cerebral Palsy.
By KAREL BOBATH. Clinics in Developmental Medicine No. 23. (Pp. 54 + 38 figures. 17s. 6d. or $2.50.) London: Spastics Society Medical Education and Information Unit in association with William Heinemann Medical Books. 1966.

This slim hard-backed volume contains 51 pages of descriptions of the motor development of normal infants and of infants and children with cerebral palsy, and an attempted interpretation of these observations in terms of automatic reactions, postural reflexes, and other neurophysiological phenomena. The text is illustrated by 38 figures, most of them photographs, of reasonably adequate quality to illustrate the necessary points.

Dr. Bobath considers normal motor development, the motor development in cerebral palsy, factors in the assessment of cerebral palsy, tonic reflexes, the interpretation of clinical findings, and the different types of cerebral palsy. The descriptive passages are good, and the attempt to analyse the observed phenomena in terms of evolving neurological patterns is a praiseworthy pioneering effort in what seems to be the most logical and most fruitful way to approach an understanding of these problems. It is not always easy reading, however, and Dr. Bobath may well leave some of his readers behind as he moves rapidly through the speculative realms of developmental neurophysiology. In some points the speculation outstrips the available evidence and the use of scientific terminology does not make them anything more than just speculations. There is obviously a great deal of work and study to be done in this field, and Dr. Bobath will be long remembered as a pioneer. His book should be read by all who study child development and cerebral palsy. Its main value will be to provoke discussions and, one hopes, further studies. Some specialists may feel irritated by parts of the book, but it is hoped that this will lead, not to destructive criticism, but to an increasing awareness of the need for further study. The book will be helpful to therapists concerned with treating children with cerebral palsy, but it should not be used by them as a definitive answer to all their questions.


The Bobaths have contributed to the general understanding of cerebral palsy by describing in neuro-physiological terms the many abnormalities of posture and movement encountered in that group of conditions, and they have done a great service to sufferers from cerebral palsy by developing a method of treatment based on neurophysiological principles. But the inexperienced therapist entering this field is still liable to be confused, both by the wide range of disorders which she encounters, and by the role of herself and her colleagues from allied professions.

For the therapist (and for the doctor who is responsible for treatment and who needs to understand what the therapist can offer) Marie Crickmay has written this excellent book in which she describes the Bobath's concept of cerebral palsy and its treatment against a background of normal development. She outlines the roles of each member of the treatment team consisting of physiotherapist, occupational therapist, and speech therapist. She writes lucidly and her text is well punctuated by clear drawings and descriptive headings.

There is a useful beginning, but in her definition of the speech therapist's role Marie Crickmay concentrates on the treatment of defects of articulation, and it is only in the penultimate chapter that the child's language is considered briefly. A child with a severe articulatory defect will never acquire normal speech, and for him continuing concentration on articulation may be most frustrating. He must be given something to speak about. His language development must be stimulated. He must be helped to communicate.