larynx 'is usually fatal unless . . . treated successfully by first aid, as with the Heimlich manoeuvre'; but no account of this procedure is given. There are no details on the care of a patient with a tracheostomy. The paediatrician's nightmare of acute epiglottitis is not relieved by conflicting statements that 'identification of the condition can be made if the back of the tongue is well depressed', (page 377), whereas most would prefer the cautionary restraint 'the patient . . . may easily be completely obstructed by meddlesome use of a tongue blade' (page 415).

The orientation of the book is North American and those working in the tropics might be disappointed by the coverage of disorders such as diphtheria, tuberculous lymphadenitis, cancrum oris, Burkitt's lymphoma, or nasopharyngeal carcinoma.

Overall, this is a good book to have on the shelf of the hospital or departmental library. It is perhaps less useful to have at your elbow in a clinical dilemma.

D G D BARR

Pre-pregnancy Care—A Manual for Practice. Edited by G Chamberlain and J Lumley. Pp 279: £14·95 hardback. John Wiley and Sons, 1986.

There is more to pre-pregnancy care than the assessment of pre-existing maternal disease or genetic history. This book formulates the subject and considers in detail aspects such as smoking, alcohol consumption, exercise, and physical and mental stress in addition to the more routine anxieties of physical disease, previous obstetric performance, and genetics. The possible benefits of this field to both doctors and prospective parents are likely to be more important in future as the ideas crystallise more clearly.

NEIL MCINTOSH

Jacob's Ladder: A parent's view of Portage. By J M Lloyd. Pp 191: £9·95. D J Costello, 1986.

Janette Lloyd's son, Jacob, has Down's syndrome. The book describes the family's involvement with the Portage Project, a home based weekly intervention scheme for developmentally delayed children up to the age of 5 years. The complexities of observing and teaching Jacob are clearly and interestingly described, but in addition the family's other needs for services such as play groups are emphasised. This is an important book, giving a consumer's point of view of services.

HELEN MCCONACHIE

Orthotics—Principles and Practice. By G K Rose. Pp 237: £29·95. William Heinemann Medical Books, 1986.

The field of orthotics covers the manufacture and clinical use of splints, braces, and similar appliances. Few paediatricians have much knowledge or experience of this topic and are content to leave the prescription of orthoses to their colleagues in orthopaedics and physiotherapy, who in turn rely heavily on the expertise of the orthotist.

Gordon Rose was for many years consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the famous orthopaedic hospital in Oswestry and is chairman of the Orthotic Training Council. He has made many original contributions to the science of appliances and is probably best known outside the world of orthopaedics for his work on the hip guidance orthosis. His new book describes the technical and clinical aspects of a wide variety of appliances. While some of these have no relevance to paediatrics, others look quite familiar (though before reading this book I would have had difficulty in naming many of them or describing their precise function). There are useful sections on the materials used and on the functional anatomy of joints, the foot, etc. The indications and complications of each treatment method are well described and are illustrated with clear diagrams.

Orthotics—Principles and Practice is primarily intended for therapists, orthopaedic surgeons, and rheumatologists, all of whom will appreciate the wealth of experience contained therein. The information is perhaps too detailed for anyone outside these specialties, and for the paediatrician it is rather heavy going. Certainly, all but the most conscientious of readers will be tempted to skip the appendices on the biomechanics of the foot and on materials science. Nevertheless, it would be a useful reference work in a child development centre and could be read with profit by anyone with a particular interest in cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and other physical handicaps. A few hours spent browsing through its pages would at least help one to disguise one's ignorance in a combined orthopaedic-paediatric clinic!

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