

Book Reviews

Sciatic and pelvic pain due to lumbosacral nerve root compression. LENNART HERLIN, M.D. Springfield, Illinois. Charles C. Thomas. 1966. Pp. x + 253. Price \$16.50.

This is a work of the quality we have come to expect of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm and is beautifully printed and illustrated. The first part is a clear and precise description of the anatomical features of lumbar disc lesions and how nerve root involvement occurs. The diagrams are excellent and the text limited to 31 pages containing a wide reference to the literature. This section should be read in detail by general practitioners wishing to achieve a full understanding of the signs presented in patients with disc syndromes. The second section of 162 pages contains 106 case reports in chronological order each illustrated by large clear diagrams showing the operative findings. These merit detailed consideration by the surgeon but only a general review by the general practitioner. Part three in tabular form (41 pages) groups syndromes together. It is interesting that 39 of the 106 cases had pelvic symptoms associated with spinal and leg phenomena.

Much can be learnt from the study of disc lesions requiring surgery but these represent only a small proportion of the total and the majority respond to conservative treatment which is not mentioned in this book. Moreover, it represents the purely neurosurgical approach and does not deal with the problems of instability of intervertebral joints. Removal of the lateral articulation is often done and the author admits that he has no experience of the merits or otherwise of spinal fusion combined with disc surgery. Nevertheless, this is a most valuable contribution and will be read throughout by surgeons and students of surgery. For general practitioners to attempt the whole would be unprofitable, but all should read the first section and select a few of the illustrated case reports in section two for detailed study.

Proceedings of a symposium on spina bifida—11th June, 1965. Proceedings of a symposium on scoliosis—5th and 6th July, 1965. Edited by P. A. ZORAB. Convened by the National Fund for Research into Poliomyelitis and other crippling diseases.

The National Fund for Research into Poliomyelitis and other crippling diseases is to be congratulated for sponsoring such symposia. On each occasion the attendance was a small number of undoubted experts in the subject who were brought together to discuss their methods of treatment or the research projects they were undertaking. The restriction of the

numbers provided a better opportunity for discussion by these experts, and I feel sure would stimulate them either to revise or to pursue further their benevolent efforts.

For each symposium the opening speakers included not only clinicians, but also pathologists, sociologists, statisticians, and genetic research workers, all of whom had already made valuable contributions to their particular subject. Their collected papers provide an exhaustive study of each subject, and these are increased in value by including the discussions that followed their presentation. The bibliography enumerated by each speaker will be of great value to any future worker in this distressing sphere of medical care.

These symposia can confidently be recommended to all who are interested in this branch of medicine.

Migraine. HAROLD MAXWELL, M.D. Bristol. John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1966. Pp. viii + 64. Price 13s. 6d.

This short book is a vindication of Dr Maxwell's thesis that "the migraine headache is an inadequate way of dealing with life situations which are stressful to the individual". After first discussing and dismissing the allergic theory of causation, he proceeds to demonstrate the neuroticism of the migraine sufferer, supporting his arguments with details of his own research. This is the meat of the book, but there are also chapters on the historical background, the differential diagnosis and the management of the condition. The final chapter is written for the migraine patient, but one feels that what has gone before is too technical for the layman to comprehend, and the final paragraph, which implies that the most advanced treatment for migraine patients can only be obtained at ten hospitals in Great Britain, will be a surprise both to layman and doctor. This book can be recommended to the general practitioner seeking a short, comprehensive review of the subject; the exhaustive bibliography will also prove most useful to those doctors interested in investigating the condition further.

Towards earlier diagnosis. Second edition. K. HODGKIN, B.M., B.CH., M.R.C.P. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1966. Pp. xvi + 459. Price 30s.

Very few books by a general practitioner have run to a second edition and the author is to be congratulated on his success. The book contains an immense amount of information not to be found elsewhere. His diagrams of age and seasonal incidence are illuminating and the occasional brief description of individual cases adds interest. As a work of reference it is invaluable, and to browse in it from page to page is most agreeable.