tions, polymyositis, collagen disorders, the effects of disturbed potassium metabolism, and on the metabolic causes of mental retardation and coma. All these are, or should be, of interest to family doctors who must come across these conditions from time to time.

Convulsions and the different forms of epilepsy are well described. Of the causes of headache osteitis of the cranial bones is put first and psychogenic headache last—an order which many practitioners will find somewhat strange. Insomnia is not mentioned in the index. Narcolepsy and cataplexy head the sleep disturbances. Only two lines are given to the symptomatic treatment of headache, and none to that of sleeplessness as such. Psychogenic giddiness comes first in the list of causes of vertigo, but some would doubt whether this is often true vertigo.

Anxiety and anxiety states, dizziness, faints, delirium (apart from delirium tremens), paraesthesiae, behaviour disorders in children and night terrors, though discussed in the text, are somewhat difficult to find quickly in a book of this size without some indication in the index as to where they can be traced.

But these are minor criticisms. All general practitioners should have this volume on their shelves as a most excellent reference book on modern clinical neurology. But its value to them would be enhanced if the index mentioned a few more of the subjects to which they often want to refer; and if a little more space were given in the text to the symptomatic treatment of the commoner and often distressing complaints, connected with the nervous system, with which so many patients come to their family doctors for immediate help.

Living with Epileptic Seizures. SAMUEL LIVINGSTON, M.D. Illinois. Chas. C. Thomas. Pp. xi + 326. Price £2 12s. 0d.

This book is described on the dust cover as a guide for all confronted with the problem of epilepsy, patients, their families, social workers, etc., and the medical profession. It is written by an experienced paediatrician who has worked with large number of epileptics and followed many of them up over some 25 years. The book is essentially American. For instance some of us would shrink from prescribing 1,000 phenobarbitone tablets at a time, and both the attitudes and facilities are different in the United States from those in Britain. The volume covers almost every aspect of the problem lucidly and in considerable detail. The author is most understanding and wise in his approach to the subject. The young epileptic should be warned he will never be able to drive a car, years before the problem actually arises. On the other hand a controlled epileptic farmer should be allowed to drive a tractor on his own land. He is very reassuring about the significance of fever convulsions and breath holding attacks. With many graphic case histories, he shows how prejudiced we still are in our attitude to this common disease, and he produces cogent arguments for a more tolerant and rational approach to the whole problem. The author diagnoses epilepsy by the exclusion of other causes of the fit, and he treats the patient as an epileptic after a single cold fit, with anticonvul-

sant drugs. With such measures he predicts 80 per cent will have no more fits, and such early treatment is more likely to produce the best results. Few would cavil at such arguments but when it comes to telling the patient or his relatives that he is an epileptic after a single episode, as the author suggests, is a more debatable point. This is an excellent, instructive, and thought provoking book, but it is definitely *not* suitable for patients or their relatives as is suggested. It is far too technical and detailed. Brain tumour as a cause of fits is mentioned in the very first paragraph and four times in the first chapter—an excellent warning to a family doctor, but not surely something to suggest to the patient. On the other hand the reviewer has read many books on epilepsy and from the view point of the family doctor this is certainly the best he has met so far.

A Primer of Medicine. M. H. PAPPWORTH, M.D., M.R.C.P. Second edition. London. Butterworths. 1963. Pp. vii + 292. Price 32s. 6d.

The fact that this book after only 3 years (and 3 reprints) appears as a 2nd edition, is in itself a recommendation of a high order, if one accepts that popularity is proof of quality. Here however it obviously demonstrates usefulness, probably to the medical student revising for examinations. It sets out like a manual for a machine, the technical skill, without worrying about theory, presumably hoping that the student has other sources of information for this, if he is the kind who wants to ask " why ". It is certainly packed with most vaulable material and facts, particularly about important signs and symptoms. It will help to encourage clinical examination, which it makes appear so simple and logical. Of course, by necessity to make a useful and concise book, it had to run the gauntlet of generalizations and omissions, which under the circumstances Dr Pappworth has negotiated extremely well. For students and again for practitioners who wish quickly to revise, this is an extremely good book and good value.

Genetics for the Clinician. C. A. CLARKE, M.D., F.R.C.P. Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1962. Pp. xiv + 294; price 47s. 6d.

This well-written book makes interesting but heavy reading. It aims —according to the cover—at stimulating in the clinician ideas for useful research. For obvious reasons, therefore, many other clinicians will be tempted to close it quickly.

Those who open it by mistake or out of curiosity, like those who come to it intentionally, will—if they persist—find many things easier to understand. Modern genetics are as different from first M.B. mendelism as jets are from toy aeroplanes. Scarcely any large sector of clinical medicine or surgery is outside the pale, a statement borne out by a glance through the long and excellent index—achondroplasia, bacteriophage, coeliac disease, diabetes, epilepsy, fibrocystic disease, gastric ulcer, hairy ears, isoniazid metabolism, leukaemia, muscular dystrophies, nail-patella syndrome, oxalosis, Paget's disease, renal tubular acidosis, suxamethonium sensitivity, twins, Wilson's disease, X and Y chromosomes and, of course, zygotes.

There is an excellent glossary and the bare minimum of " mere