

Mending Minds. By L L HESTON (Pp 233; Price: H/b £17.95. P/b £9.95). 1992. Oxford, W. H. Freeman & Co. Ltd. ISBN 0-7167-2158-9, 0-7167-2167-8.

This is a guidebook for patients, their friends and their relatives to the changing landscape of the "New Psychiatry". Non-technical writing, and recurring sections entitled "If you think you have . . ." or "If a friend or relative has . . ." well fulfil its laudable intentions. It is good on depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, dementia, and alcohol abuse; less good on anxiety disorder, drug abuse; and antisocial personality; and weak on problems of sexuality.

The book's triumphalist conclusion, "The Future of Mental Illness", rashly promises "The causes of mental illness". The author reveals himself as an unreconstructed believer in the bio-medical model, with the gene as its Rosetta Stone. The environment is often ignored or denigrated: thus, saying "investigators cannot specify a single environmental contributor to schizophrenia" (p.209), ignores neurodevelopmental anomalies, epigenetics, or expressed emotions in relation to behavioural/cognitive therapies are barely mentioned for phobias, anxiety disorders, or depression, and psychotherapy seems merely to mean family education about the new wonder drugs and the future glories and hopes from understanding DNA. Occasionally the book's balance is eccentric: two pages on the arcane molecular biology of heat-shock proteins illustrate the bizarre suggestion that stress, "as used in environmental studies . . . lacks measurable physical properties, so it is undefined . . ." and progress must wait until we have "translated stress to the levels [typified in the biology of the heat-shock proteins]".

At its best this book is very good, explaining the old ideas well. The section "If you are considering ECT . . ." is exemplary. But it is marred by being written by a physician interested principally in biology. Its insular American view will restrict its utility elsewhere, since drug names are unfamiliar, legal procedures irrelevant, colloquialisms obscure (What is a "barrio?"), and assumptions are parochial (in depression, "get firearms out of the home").

CHRIS McMANUS

Child and Adolescent Neurology for Psychiatrists Edited by DM KAUFMAN, GE SOLOMONSON and CR PFEFFER. (Pp 269; Price:

There are excellent chapters on muscular diseases, on Movers, and on Progressive disorder nervous system. Most of the topodiatic Neurology are represented.

The book does not fulfil its in making a bridge between the because the authors, and the edit no allowance for the cast of mind of knowledge of their proposed No consideration is given to the manner in which these diseases w when they appear in their various d the clinics of non-neurologists. Thi in which the potential reader ne seduced, persuaded towards seein of this point of view. For the mo reader is simply hit over the head t as in any hard nosed volume of neurology they might come upon. rich library its worth a look unti edition comes along.

Static Encephalopathies of Infancy and Childhood. Edited by G MILLER (Pp 372 Illustrated; Price: \$14.95). New York, Raven Press. ISBN 0-88163-872-4.

Chronic, non-progressive brain lesions constitute a major cause of childhood disability and are certain frequent reason for referral to the neurologist. Lesions of the developing brain occurring before, during or after in a wide variety of deficits affect intellectual and motor development. This multi-author book have aimed at an in-depth account of the subtle and illustrate those specific conditions. Recent advances in neuro-immunology, molecular genetics have led to a new understanding of their aetiology. The identification of a genetic or developmental abnormality of the brain not only has implications for the child and his family, it is crucial when medico-legal action is considered for presumptive birth.

The first section of the book provides an overview of the definition, causation and management problems of mental retardation and cerebral palsy, attention deficit disorder, behavioural problems, the implications for communication with parents and social treatment. A chapter on "Neurological evaluation" is, unfortunately