Book reviews

ANATOMIE, PATHOLOGIE ET CHIRURGIE DU NERF FACIAL
By C. H. Chouard, R. Charachon, A. Morgon,
and H. P. Cathala. (Pp. 377; illustrated; price not
stated.) Masson: Paris. 1972.

Lesions of the facial nerve are among the most frequent of neurological disorders but they have attracted more attention from otolaryngologists than from neurologists, perhaps because the seventh cranial nerve is so very accessible to surgical intervention. There is already an enormous literature on the subject but no other book can compare in range and authority with the present volume produced by four French authors, three of them surgeons. In fact its title is rather incomplete because one third of the text refers to the clinical aspects of facial palsy.

The first four chapters provide an accurate and well-illustrated account of the detailed anatomy of the nerve and of its many variations. Then comes an account of the appropriate pathophysiology with a description of electrical testing of the facial nerve and muscles but the discussion is more superficial than in the earlier chapters. The authors dismiss latency measurement as unsatisfactory because of technical difficulties. There is little mention of the published work on the prognostic significance of either latency variations or of changes in the threshold of excitability of the facial nerve. They prefer to use sampling of motor unit patterns and the amplitude of the response to electrical stimulation of the nerve as their prognostic criteria but give no satisfactory evidence in support of their views. A further short chapter describes the methods of testing taste and their significance.

The clinical section of the book is detailed, accurate, and comprehensive. It covers all sites of facial palsy from the nucleus to the periphery and most types from osteopetrosis to idiopathic. The various aspects of conservative treatment are discussed but the views expressed on steroid therapy are not widely accepted. This section ends with a succinct but adequate account of hemifacial spasm.

The effects of malformation of the face and skull on the facial nerve are fully described. The final sections of the book contain a detailed account of facial nerve surgery in terms of the various operative approaches and of the management of the lesions revealed. The last two chapters deal with the preservation of the facial nerve during otosurgery and with the methods of plastic surgery applicable in complete, irremediable facial palsy.

This book is well illustrated, elegantly written, and attractively presented. It is by far the most exhaustive and wide ranging account of the facial nerve and its problems available in any language. There is a bibliography of nearly 1,000 references which are well chosen from the several thousand titles dealing with the subject. It can be strongly recommended to all those surgeons and physicians whose professional work or curiosity has excited their interest in this fascinating but baffling nerve.

DERYCK TAVERNER

L'ENCEPHALE Vol. 62, no. 1. By J. Delay and
F. Lhermitte. (Pp. 105; illustrated; 140F.) Doin:
Paris. 1973.

The first number of volume 62 of a long established journal devoted to neurology, psychiatry, and psychosomatic medicine contains four relatively long articles in which a number of clinical problems are reviewed. In the first there is a discussion on the physiological basis and pathological significance of laughter and this is followed by a review of delirium in old age and a re-evaluation of schizophrenia. In a final article the extrapyramidal syndromes which may follow exposure to psychotropic drugs are reviewed. The treatment is clinical rather than experimental and, at least in the present issue, the material is perhaps of more interest to those working in psychiatry than to neurologists. The articles make interesting reading and this is clearly a journal which should be available in medical libraries.

J. A. R. LENMAN

INTRACRANIAL PRESSURE: Experimental and clinical
aspects Edited by M. Brock and H. Dietz. (Pp.
383; illustrated; DM 78, US \$24.80.) Berlin—
Heidelberg—New York. Springer: Berlin. 1972.

In July 1972 the first International Symposium on Intracranial Pressure was held at the new Medical High School in Hanover, and six months later this well produced (though expensive) volume was published. That in itself was an achievement, and it differs from other conference books also in that the chairmen of each session have added a comment which includes reference to discussion. A final section summarizes the views expressed at the final meeting of chairmen about four controversial issues, and these attempt to summarize the current state of the art and give pointers to future developments. These