symposia was held in October 1974 in New Delhi and considered growth and development of the brain, and the proceedings are now presented under the editorship of Dr. Mary Brazier. Contributions include a number from well-known research workers from Europe and North America, as well as less well-known, including some from India and Iran.

Topics include very full and helpful reviews of morphological, biochemical and neurophysiological aspects of brain maturation, as well as a detailed account of the effects of human malnutrition. It is these reviews rather than the accounts of contributors' original work which are most valuable to those seeking a recent perspective of this very important field.

Rajalakshuni is rather cautious in his paper on 'Factors affecting psychological development in man' in extrapolating from the intellectual deficits seen as a result of extreme malnutrition (for example, kwashiorkor) to populations where nutritional intake is thought to be sufficiently inadequate to influence birth weight. He concludes that, in India, the evidence studied so far does not suggest that the mental development of well children differs significantly according to their nutritional status. In a final provocative paper with a title more like a banner headline from a daily tabloid 'U.S. poverty impact on brain development' a group from the Universities of California (San Diego and Berkeley) conclude that as many as 10% of the population of San Diego County 'are seriously undernourished according to our criteria relating to brain jeopardy'. (Symbionese Liberation Army, please note.)

JOHN WILSON

Aids to the Examination of the Peripheral Nervous System Medical Research Council Memorandum No. 45. (Pp. 62; illustrated; 80p.) Her Majesty's Stationery Office: London, 1976.

For 35 years *Aids to the Investigation of Peripheral Nerve Injuries* has been the most useful guide available for the examination of patients with neuromuscular disease. Prepared by the Medical Research Council in wartime, it was primarily intended for use in connection

with nerve injuries. The new title reflects its wider use, and opportunity has been taken to revise the text and captions, to introduce new illustrations, and to replace photographs. Provided that the user is aware of the more common anatomical variables—so called anomalous innervation—and meticulously follows the methods illustrated, this guide will remain essential for every neurologist. The nomenclature has been updated.

J. A. SIMPSON

EEG Instrumentation and Technology By E. T. Richey and Richard Namon. (Pp. 206; illustrated; \$22.50.) Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, Illinois, 1976.

This book cannot be compared with standard works such as *EEG Technology* (2nd Edition) by Cooper, Osselson, and Shaw (Butterworths). The instrumentation described is of 1950 vintage, and the style in the tradition of Baedeker: 'Do not attempt to operate or troubleshoot a piece of smelling or smoking equipment', with the fatherly advice 'The manufacturer will be willing to help since the equipment will not have been paid'.

Elementary EEG technology is carefully explained but frequently oversimplified to the point of imbecility, and there is a quite unwarranted emphasis on localising tumours—a job much better left to the EMI scanner—whereas the proper domain of electroencephalography is the study of cerebral function.

H. R. A. TOWNSEND

The Responsive Brain By W. C. McCallum and J. R. Knott. (Pp. 272; illustrated; £10.00.) John Wright & Sons Ltd.: Bristol, 1976.

The unresponsive brain is surely no brain at all! The reader might therefore expect from the title a wide-ranging review of all the ways in which the brain can transmute stimuli into action or stored information. The editors can hardly be blamed for preferring their eye-catching title to the true one: 'The Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Event-related Slow Potentials of the Brain', but they conceal that the responsiveness refers to a very limited aspect of the electrical activity of the brain, made dimly visible by very special techniques.

In the main this congress was about the slow potential changes which can be

detected on the scalp between two stimuli, the first a warning, and the second requiring a response; in other words, the Contingent Negative Variation, discovered by Grey Walter and his colleagues a dozen years ago. The properties of other slow potentials related to movement and to sensory stimuli are described, in particular those of the so-called P-300, which is a positive deflection occurring around that number of milliseconds after a sensory stimulus; the interrelationship of these components is involved and was then unresolved.

As with all congress reports, the basic material of this book is the presentations, of varied weight and length, by the individual speakers. However, the organisers and editors have done a first class job in welding them into something like a logical exposition of the subject. The references have been amalgamated into a single extensive bibliography. In short, an invaluable book to those working in this field.

W. A. COBB

GABA in Nervous System Function Edited by E. Roberts, T. N. Chase, and D. B. Tower. (Pp. 554; illustrated; £10.00.) Raven Press: New York, 1976.

The volume records the proceedings of a workshop held in February 1975. The contributors circulated their manuscripts before the meeting and subsequently revised them for publication in this volume. The result is a comprehensive and authoritative review of the 'state of the art'. The material includes the synthesis, synaptic inactivation, and degradation of GABA in the nervous system; immunohistochemical visualization, subcellular localisation, and regional distribution in the CNS; electrophysiological actions of GABA in invertebrate and vertebrate neurons; the characterisation of GABA receptors; clinically orientated chapters on the role of GABA in epilepsy and extrapyramidal disease; and a discussion of possible means of manipulating brain GABA in man. The problem is that few tools are available for safe use in patients, and there is none which selectively affects GABA in one part of the brain but not another. However, when such drugs are synthesised their use will be based on the basic information on GABA in the CNS represented

by the sort of painstaking studies described in this book. This is a 'must' for all those involved in or commencing GABA research.

C. D. MARSDEN

The Practice of Pediatric Neurology By K. Swaiman and F. Wright. (Pp. 1198; illustrated; £65.70.) Henry Kimpton Publishers: London. 1976.

Dr Ford's textbook of paediatric neurology enjoyed an exalted reputation well beyond the sphere of interest of paediatricians and paediatric neurologists; indeed there were some who averred that in its time 'Ford' was among the best of all neurological texts. The last revision in 1966 was a valuable but unsuccessful attempt at updating; since then there have been important and extensive advances in paediatric neurology which have sharpened the need for a replacement, and none of the recent texts directed to paediatricians and those with a general interest in paediatric neurology has sufficed as a work of reference.

Professor Kenneth Swaiman and Dr Francis Wright, as co-editors of a two-volume treatise, have drawn together contributions from 44 other American authors, and are the first to try and fill the vacuum left by Ford. But at £65.70 is it worth it?

There are three main sections: 'Evaluation of the patient's problems', 'Symptoms and signs of neurologic disease in childhood', and 'Discussion of neurologic diseases in childhood', and thus there is a commendable emphasis on the clinical basis of paediatric neurological practice. Many of the authors are accepted experts on the subjects about which they write, and their contributions have an authority which others, written by others with less experience, lack.

The transatlantic emphasis does not limit coverage of the world literature but there are some surprising gaps. For example, there are only three pages devoted to speech and language, matters which have deservedly attracted great attention in both America and Europe, whilst the sections on neuropsychiatry, which occupies a proportionately large part of a paediatric neurologist's time, seem to lack insight as well as incisiveness. There are tautological difficulties over the relation between migraine and epilepsy (p. 156), while the section on vertigo owes more to adult neurology than to an understanding

of the problem in young children. Leber's amaurosis, a much more frequent cause of poor vision in childhood than Leber's disease, is not mentioned, and once again the genetics of the latter disease is inaccurately presented. Evidently the author of the section on movement disorders has not realised that the patients described by Pampiglione and Maia suffered from the same disorder as those presented by Kinsbourne as the dancing eye syndrome.

As in many neurological texts, therapeutics get minimal attention, or is this the malign influence of FDA? Casual examination of the bibliography reveals sufficient inaccuracies to make one wonder if there has been systematic checking. Illustrations are clear and plentiful but not always relevant.

Although this text will serve as an important and valuable reference work, it lacks the authority of Ford. Its place is in departmental libraries—weight as well as price are threats to private bookshelves.

JOHN WILSON

The Diagnosis and Treatment of Alcoholism By G. G. Forrest. (Pp. 257; no price quoted.) Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, Illinois. 1975.

The author of this book is a clinical psychologist who is supervisor of an alcoholism rehabilitation programme at Army Headquarters, Fort Carson, Colorado. He has a major interest in a psychotherapeutic approach to the alcoholic and problem drinker. His concepts are eclectic in nature, embracing a much wider range of therapeutic strategies than might be expected in certain transatlantic psychoanalytic strongholds.

Misleading stereotypes of the alcoholic, leading to therapeutic nihilism, are initially discussed. Psychotherapeutic tactics are later described. Principles of individual psychotherapy on modified Rogerian lines are lucidly presented. Group psychotherapy, however, is rightly depicted as being currently the most promising treatment modality. Warmth of personality and a positive liking for problem drinker patients—not always easy to achieve—are regarded as important ingredients in the therapist himself. A success rate of 75% is claimed for group therapy over a six month period—a figure which would seem optimistic in the north of Britain where heavy drinking receives strong cultural approval. The book ends with a useful discussion of the follow-up and evaluation of alcohol rehabilitation.

This volume is a valuable addition to the already large literature on alcoholism and will be informative to all who are involved in alcohol rehabilitation programmes.

A. BALFOUR SCLATER

Pathophysiologic, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Aspects of Headache By M. H. Granger and G. Poch. (Pp. 128; illustrated; SwFr./DM 62-, \$24.00.) S. Karger: Basel. 1976.

This is the fourth of the series *Research and Clinical Studies in Headache* edited by Dr Arnold Friedman and Dr Mary Granger, the first of which appeared in 1967. This volume does not pretend to be comprehensive, but picks out selected topics for its contents. The selection is curious and the topics seem to contain no thread of continuity to link the subjects which are covered.

The first chapter on the head in the body image concept is typical of the trendy impressionism perpetrated by the modern day psychologist cum sociologist. There is little attempt to relate the somewhat speculative conjectures to the patient with headaches, and one's interest wanes a little on encountering '... found a tendency for men with high head awareness to be relatively unconcerned about anal aspects of behavior, such as obsessive concern about cleanliness ...'.

A useful survey of headaches associated with diseases of the eye by Myles Behrens covers the major areas of overlap between the ophthalmologist and the neurologist. Spira, Mylecharane, and Lance provide a fascinating account of their experimental pharmacology of humoral and anti-migraine drugs on the circulation of the monkey; to some extent this fills the gap of the lack of an experimental model for migraine, but not completely—as the authors themselves concede. This chapter complements the following one by Dalessio which reviews vasoactive substances, vascular permeability, and their role in migraine. Catecholamines, histamine, serotonin, kinins, prostaglandins, and 'slow reactive substance (SRS-A)' are considered as vasoactive substances associated with inflammation. Some would doubt the concept of a sterile inflammatory reaction, postulated by Dalessio, in the absence of evidence of a cellular response in the vessel wall in migraine.

Succeeding chapters review the role of allergy, the place for investigation by