Postoperative Considerations, 50 pages in length, outlines the care of infections, cerebrospinal fluid fistula, repair of cranial defects and surgery for an inadequate primary operation. The final section, *Conclusions*, 12 pages in length, is more of an appendix of after-thought to the subjects already discussed in detail.

The book is written by a man with a wide clinical experience and knowledge of the literature. He points out that during the Korean conflict "standardization of the management of neurosurgical casualties evolved", by the end of that conflict 95% of all head injuries were evacuated by helicopter. The importance of planned evacuation, definitive surgery by surgeons who know what they are doing, is stressed. He also lays to rest a recurring neurosurgical myth that civilian or urban bullet injuries of the brain are somehow different from those experienced on the battlefield. (Most of the injuries sustained in the Korean War were low velocity in type). In the major section in the book there is a detailed description of the surgical management of various injuries of the head. Most of the diagrams have been reprinted from a book that he co-edited with JB Coates Jr *Neurological Surgery of Trauma* 1965. This latter volume is a classic, and as essential reading as the *War Surgery Supplement* of the *British Journal of Surgery* 1947 for those likely to treat missile injuries. The present monograph apart from adding one or two CT scan pictures does not enhance the details of the surgical technique in his former classic book. He emphasises the importance of adequate debridement, haemostasis, dural repair, and subsequent cranioplasty.

As a monograph of one man's extensive experience and knowledge of the literature, the development of the definitive treatment for injured patients, the book must be recommended. As a surgical guide, however, it must be regarded as a companion to the original book for which he is justly famous.

HA CROCKARD

The Olivopontocerebellar Atrophies. (*Advances in Neurology Series Volume 41*). Edited by Roger C Duvoisin and Andreas Plaitakis. (Pp 304; \$53.50.) New York: Raven Press, 1984.

This is a most useful volume on a long-neglected subject. System degenerations, which used to be a backwater for pedants,

are now in the mainstream of biochemistry, genetics and even possible treatment and prevention. Olivopontocerebellar atrophies (OPCA) are a very heterogeneous group of disorders despite sharing some major clinical and morphological features with other ataxias and extrapyramidal disorders. A central issue in the evolving OPCA story has been the biochemical defect. This book gives most useful clarification of previous chaos and contains detailed reviews of the clinical, pathological and biochemical features of OPCAs. The CT changes in various types of OPCA are illustrated in detail and autonomic failure in these disorders is discussed in depth. A full repertoire of ocular motor dysfunction with loss of "burst" cells is described, although perhaps surprisingly there is no mention of REM sleep changes with brainstem lesions; or of the possible biological significance of absent REM sleep. Also possible respiratory complications of autonomic failure in OPCA are not considered.

The pharmacology of OPCA remains rudimentary but there have been great advances in biochemistry largely owing to experimental lesions of the olivary system caused by 3-acetyl-pyridine. Glycolipids in renal epithelial cells, changes in GABA, aspartate and glutamic acid in the brain, and deficiency of glutamate dehydrogenase in the leukocytes have all been found in various types of OPCA. Despite these major advances, the exact brain function of glutamate dehydrogenase remains unknown. Altogether this is a useful, exciting, well edited and well produced book.

JD PARKES

Norepinephrine. (*Frontiers of Clinical Neuroscience Series Vol. 2.*) Edited by Michael G Ziegler & Raymond Lake. (Pp 521; £76.00.) London: Williams & Wilkins, 1984.

Noradrenaline is a critical neurotransmitter substance in both the brain and the periphery which is involved in numerous physiological processes and which is implicated in many disease states. Since it was one of the first neurotransmitter substances identified a wealth of literature exists on the actions of this catecholamine.

This book contains 32 chapters occupying some 500 pages dealing with a variety of topics relating to noradrenaline. The coverage is extensive and provides many in-depth reviews of noradrenaline action. From the measurement of noradrenaline

concentrations, to its anatomical distribution and physiology and function through to clinical implication of noradrenaline action, the reader is bombarded with information.

It must have taken a mammoth effort to produce such a volume and the editors and authors have clearly laboured long and hard. However, it is difficult to see who is going to read the result. Perhaps as a library reference volume it will be of some use but I suspect the cost will be prohibitive. Certainly, not light informative reading for those with a passing interest in this area. Indeed, it is difficult to see who this volume is directed at for it would be very few whose interests are sufficiently wide to encompass its content.

P JENNER

Progress in Aphasiology. Advances in Neurology Series Vol 42. Edited by F Clifford Rose. (Pp 382; \$65.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1984.

Real progress in aphasiology has perhaps not quite kept pace with the flurry of books proclaiming it. This new addition to the well-known series includes reviews and research papers written from various standpoints, rather less than half of them neurological in orientation. The remainder (by linguists, speech therapists and psychologists) will present varying degrees of difficulty to this Journal's readership and a few may be impervious even to some "cerebral" neurologists.

The book is a report of a symposium and is not therefore as well integrated as a purpose-written book. There is for example much repetition in the two chapters on Natural History and Recovery (both in themselves good). Amongst the other sections of neurological interest and enjoyed by the reviewer, are those of L'Hermitte, Kertesz, Vignolo and others covering mainly subcortical contributions to language, and praxis. The useful paper by Poeck *et al* highlights those difficult cases where scanning localisation does not correlate well with aphasia types, and Stein and Fowler provide new data in support of their interesting theory about the mechanism of dyslexia. Some other chapters are idiosyncratic or of less interest and the book is in no sense a comprehensive text. Its main value to neurologists will probably be in the library where those interested can delve into its better parts.

JOHN C MEADOWS