BOOK REVIEWS


In issuing an inexpensive reprint of the "Croonian Lectures on Muscular Movements," delivered by the late Dr. Beevor in 1903, the guarantors of Brain have served medicine wisely. For this standard work, which is today so often praised, may in recent years have been less often read, and must certainly, on account of its inaccessibility, have been rarely owned by medical readers.

The lectures give an anatomical account of the simplest movements taking place at particular joints of arm, neck, and trunk; for example, flexion and extension at the wrist, pronation and supination of forearm. The muscle bellies taking part and their tendons were watched and felt, in paralysed as well as in healthy subjects. These methods are now, of course, in daily use in neurological and orthopaedic practice, and every medical student should become familiar with them during his study of human anatomy.

But the lectures are also a study in the physiology of willed movement, of which these simplest movements are examples. From this point of view, the modes of association of muscles acting about the joints are analysed. The order of recruitment of the muscles is described for movements of graded and measured power.

Most of the section dealing with problems of central representation has been omitted from the reprint "as containing views now no longer held." It will be generally allowed that cerebral localization is in many respects differently understood today than in 1903, and that this part of Lecture IV does not share the permanent value of the rest. Nevertheless, the deletion will be regretted by some. The modern experimental physiologist might be interested in Beevor's own appraisal of his work with Horsley, and in his discussion of the possibility that certain movement sequences are laid down in the spinal cord and are merely activated by cortico-spinal impulses. He is clear, at all events, that individual muscles are not accessible to the excitable cortex.

The Croonian Lectures are supplemented by a later paper, "Remarks on Paralysis of the Movements of the Trunk in Hemiplegia," in which is described a case of (presumed) capsular hemiplegia in which the patient, on trying to sit up, fell towards the paralysed side. A marvellous analysis of the disability is followed by an ingenious, but highly speculative, commentary.

The reprint is prefaced by a thoughtful foreword by Dr. Walshe.


This essay was originally Dr. Cajal's address to the Royal Academy of Medicine, Madrid, in 1893. Since then it has been published in several Spanish editions and clearly must have been an inspiration to many research workers. It may at once be said that no intending research worker should fail to study the precepts and counsels set forth. The translation is good and the whole forms a delightful and fascinating account of this great scientist's thoughts on the life devoted to research. Dr. Cajal clearly had exceptional insight into the qualities and conflicts which existed in the minds of his junior colleagues, and his advice is amazingly practical. For example, he warns the beginner against excessive hero worship or devotion to practical sciences. Many types of investigator are criticized including the dilettantes or contemplators, the erudite or bibliophiles, the instrument addicts, and the constructors of theories. The environment favourable to scientific work receives special consideration and includes a thoughtful section on the investigator and his family. This even includes detailed advice as to the type of wife to choose.

Some of the comments are highly entertaining: "If our lips were not sealed by discretion we could illustrate these pages with vivid examples of how frivolously ostentatious tastes of the wife have interrupted brilliant careers, obliging the newcomer in science to exchange his study for politics, the microscope for the automobile, and the redeeming evenings in the laboratory for the useless hours spent at parties or in the theatre."


This textbook is an outstanding addition to neurological literature. It combines a remarkable thoroughness with a pleasant, interesting and up-to-date presentation of the subject matter. The author is clearly much more than a collector of information, and incorporates in his writing a thoughtful assessment of the facts. The several hundred illustrations are well chosen and clearly reproduced. There is a useful list of about 2,000 references divided according to subject. Neurologists will be well advised to add this important work to their library.
BOOK REVIEWS


The twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Groupement Belge d'Etudes oto-neuro-ophtalmologiques et neuro-chirurgicales has been marked by the publication of the proceedings of the meeting held in Brussels in September, 1950.

The theme of the session was a review of the vascular abnormalities affecting the central nervous system. The “Livre Jubilaire” contains nine excellent papers in which the clinical and pathological aspects of intracranial aneurysms and angiomata are discussed, and there is a section on the treatment of intracranial aneurysm. These are followed by a number of communications on the same subjects. Among the authors are some of the distinguished members of this society.

The majority of the illustrations are of an exceptionally fine quality and there are several good bibliographies. The volume provides a useful account of the subject.


This is an essay on fantasy, perception, and interpretation. The author makes a complicated distinction between fantasy or inspiration (Wahnneinfall) on the one hand, and false interpretation of perceptions (Wahnwahrnehmung) on the other, and he maintains that false interpretation rather than perceptual disorder is at the basis of schizophrenia. He brings no new evidence to support his argument; nor does he suggest how interpretation comes to be disturbed in the schizophrenic psychosis.


In the introduction the author states his aim clearly: “this book deals with the mathematical theory and statistical methods used in interpreting test results”, but the actual contents might be more exactly described if the words “interpreting test results” were replaced by “manipulating normally distributed measures”.

Again, the author writes, “This book is written primarily for those working in test development,” and a student who is likely to become involved in large scale “objective” testing will indeed find interesting discussion, all the major techniques, many ingenious devices, and an extensive bibliography. On the other hand, practically everything which concerns the human being who takes a test is not within the scope of this book. The content or form of test items and all such contingencies as anxiety engendered by the examination, tensions at home or at school, recent removal from one town to another, or transient sickness lie outside the author's field and their effects in test results are not considered.

It may be no criticism of the book or the author to say that it could only thrive in an atmosphere of mass production. The expenditure of effort required to produce a fully “standardized”, “reliable”, “objective” examination can only be recouped on enormous groups of candidates or by tests remaining in service over a term of years.

A reader who wishes to learn about theories of mental testing will not find them here. He may not indeed find them easily elsewhere, but there are a number of books, including some recently published such as “Mental Testing” by F. L. Goodenough or “Psychological Testing” by J. L. Mursell, which, though not dealing explicitly with theory, have much to say about the history, principles, and practice of the subject.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Review in a later issue is not precluded by notice here of books recently received.)


