BOOK REVIEWS


This book by Dr. Gieles will be a useful source of information to those who are studying the behaviour of the nervous system from whatever angle. Experimental neurology now covers a vast field in which anatomists, physiologists, psychologists, biochemists, clinicians, and many others are each cultivating their separate plots. Dr. Gieles is one of the few people who try to study the landscape as a whole. Inevitably his description of each little field may disappoint those who work within its confines, and may be considered by them to be superficial or uncritical. And yet the general result is a valuable encouragement to the student to think widely and to know something of all that is going on.

This volume is well produced with some excellent diagrams and ample references at the end of each chapter. The cost seems to be excessive.


This admirable little book is the second edition of a concise but comprehensive guide to neurological examination. It contains much clinical information which is often not included or is difficult to extract from a larger textbook. It is therefore unfortunate that the high price of 22s. will prevent many students and younger doctors from possessing it, the more so when it is issued from the presses of two universities.


This textbook was first published 30 years ago. It is no easy matter to keep a textbook up to date and in this instance it would certainly have been better to start again. The information provided about many recent advances in knowledge is quite inadequate. Thus the reader will turn to these pages in vain to find out how to treat a case of meningitis, or how to investigate the metabolic abnormality in hepato-ventricular degeneration, and yet the method of giving malaria to cases of G.P.I. is still described. References to the handling of conditions such as cerebral abscess and subdural haematoma are clearly out of touch with modern surgical practice. It is astonishing to read that pachymeningitis haemorrhagic interna is still considered as a disease separate from chronic subdural haematoma, and that “the treatment is symptomatic” (p. 513).


The author of this monograph is well known for his experimental observations on the properties of isolated areas of cerebral cortex, and his critical assessment of the phenomena observed in this field of research form a most interesting part of this book. The prolonged response to a single stimulus, the burst response of isolated cortex, and other forms of after-discharge all give glimpses of neuronal mechanisms which are tantalizing in their complexity.

In discussing the possible explanations of some higher cerebral mechanisms he writes (p. 56): “It would be helpful to the average reader if the authors of papers on the upper end of the central nervous system were to state, before their section on methods, their prejudices and their hopes.”

In a careful discussion of the spontaneous activity of central neurones the author practices his advice and admits a mild prejudice against the belief that there are cells within the central nervous system whose discharge is spontaneous. His final conclusion is that the existence of such cells has not been proved, and then with an almost peevish gesture, adds that the importance of this question has in any case been over-emphasized.

The last chapter discusses the possible mechanisms involved in memory and here the references to clinical observations are hesitating and not so authoritative. The earlier chapters will, however, be read eagerly by students of brain mechanisms.


This book is a collection of reports prepared for the thirty-first (1957) congress of French medicine and comprises seven papers dealing with the treatment of cerebral vascular disease.

The first paper, written by Professor Alajouanine and his colleagues, deals with the physiology of cerebral ischaemia and the pathology of cerebral haemorrhage, infarction, and oedema. Cerebro-vasospasm is apparently no longer acceptable to the French school of neurology but the conjectural possibility of spasm occurring in the internal carotid or vertebral arteries has to some extent replaced it as a causation of transient ischaemic episodes. The evidence for this seems to be the vasoconstriction seen during cerebral angiography.

The other contributions deal with the treatment of cerebral haemorrhage, of apoplexy in general, of cerebral arterial thrombosis, of cerebral thrombophlebitis and,
BOOK REVIEWS

finally, with the surgical treatment of cerebrovascular accidents. Each paper has its own extensive bibliography and there are seven well produced carotid angiograms. Unfortunately there is no index.

The difficulty with a book of this kind is the amount of repetition that seems inevitable, because each set of authors naturally wish to state their views widely about the pathology and treatment of this difficult subject, and so considerable overlap develops. Generally it seems that the French have abandoned stellate ganglion block for cerebral infarction, and are opposed to the use of anticoagulants in the acute attack except for cases of cerebral embolism. It is perhaps a little surprising to find this hesitancy to use anticoagulants in the paper on intracranial thromboembolitis, where the only firm indication for their use is thought to be cavernous sinus thrombosis.

Routine cerebral angiography was performed in all cases of suspected cerebral infarction by the Toulouse school, and in 4,000 arteriographies only four cases were made worse.

There is the surprising omission from this book of basilar or vertebral arterial stenosis, and there is very little reference to cerebral embolism, although carotid atheroma is given due importance. Otherwise this volume gives a good idea of French opinion on cerebral vascular diseases and their treatment.


Ten years have elapsed since the tenth edition of Villiger’s well-known compendium of the anatomy and pathology of the peripheral nervous system. Therefore, several parts of the book had to be rewritten to include new experiences, especially the chapter on the autonomic system.

The many editions prove the popularity this book has achieved by students in anatomy and neurology in the past, and the new edition will be welcomed.


This is an extensive study of the carotid arteries from a standpoint which is angiosurgical rather than neurosurgical. The first part is devoted to anatomy and physiology; the second to operations on the carotids, including chapters on grafting, jugulo-carotid anastomosis, arteriectomy, and intracarotid blood transfusion as a method of resuscitation; the third describes carotid pathology; and the fourth and last part, on the surgery of the carotid sinus and body, has a lot to say about denervation and infiltration of the carotid sinus for a variety of conditions.

The approach to the subject is that of the school of the late Professor René Leriche, at whose instigation the author, his pupil, undertook this study. Certain matters therefore receive an emphasis that might not be accorded to them in this country, but the authoritative character of the book is not lessened because of this. There are 83 pages of most valuable bibliography.


This volume records the proceedings of an international symposium held at the Wellcome Foundation in April, 1957. Rapid progress has been made in this subject since it was shown that the enteramine of Ersparmer and the serum vasoconstrictor of Page, Rapport, and Green were each identical with 5-hydroxytryptamine. The distribution of serotonin in nature, the biochemical mechanisms involved in its formation and destruction and its actions on the animal body are all considered in this volume. The contributors to this symposium have themselves been responsible for many of the major discoveries concerning serotonin and the volume is certainly the most comprehensive and authoritative summary of knowledge on the subject at present available.

It is not as yet possible to define the role of serotonin in the animal body and knowledge of its pharmacological actions exceeds understanding of its physiological functions. This is particularly true of the relation between serotonin and the functioning of the nervous system. The substance is present in brain; its distribution within the brain is very uneven and there is evidence that it is more rapidly synthesized and broken down in the brain than anywhere else in the body. Furthermore, drugs which profoundly affect nervous function, such as lysergic acid diethylamide, reserpine, and inhibitors of amine oxidase are known to react with serotonin in one way or another. It remains to be seen whether these various observations can be integrated in such a manner as to illuminate understanding of normal and abnormal nervous function.


This book is a very praiseworthy attempt to give a more objective basis to the study of cytoarchitecture. Previous definitions of the various histological characteristics of the brain which have been published have often been based on little more than the personal authority of the author concerned. Haug on the other hand has now used the quantitative method elaborated by Chalkley to determine the volume of nerve cells and glia cells in the visual cortex of man and other mammals. Besides 20 normal human brains Haug also examined six schizophrenic brains and in these he found no statistically significant differences in the nerve cell or glia population, as compared with the normal brains. It appears that the duration and type of fixation is less significant in this type of quantitative analysis than one might have thought; certainly this is a fact which has not been evident in previous work of this kind.

The book contains a great deal of information on the quantification of brain cells, and Haug’s approach to the problem is both careful and critical. His results are
BOOK REVIEWS

illustrated by clear and instructive diagrams and the book should prove to be most useful to anyone who intends to make a quantitative study of the brain.


This monograph from Hungary first reviews the literature of experimental head injury and then describes the findings in 50 experiments performed on cats. Changes in the E.E.G. are recorded, and special attention is paid to the circulatory reactions and to the microscopic changes in the arteries and capillaries. Those interested in experimental commissio cerebri will find this a useful book of reference.


This monograph is based on a study of 82 patients with hepatic disease, 40 of whom died in coma. The series was collected before 1953 and, almost inevitably with a rapidly advancing subject, certain newer techniques have not been available. Blood ammonia estimations and portal venography were seldom performed. The clinical sections are disappointing, as statistical lists of symptoms and signs are not an adequate substitute for clear descriptive writing. The neuropathologist will obtain little help in the management of the mildly demented and tremulous patient with abnormal liver function tests. The term “hepatocerebral amylopathy” to describe the syndromes of nervous disorder secondary to liver disease is not likely to come into general use, particularly as evidence of involvement of the spinal cord is slight.

The value of the book lies in drawing attention to the potentially extremely varied ways in which disordered liver function may affect the brain. The metabolic functions of the liver are, however, so extensive, and the requirements of the brain so little understood, that an almost limitless field of speculation is opened. The review of biochemical data contains much valuable information and suggests many starting points for further investigation. The author’s plea for extensive application of biochemical techniques to neurological problems is undoubtedly just, but is perhaps carried a little too far in his hope that this monograph “will signal the termination . . . to clinical correlative studies”. It is surely precisely in correlating clinical states with chemical data revealed by newer techniques that future advances must lie.

It remains to be said that the author does not employ the English language with felicity and that the price of the book might well be reduced by the omission of full-page portraits of Hippocrates, Galen, and Kinnier Wilson.


Dr. Dubitscher’s thesis is that in turbulent times external stresses are far more important causes of suicide than intrapsychic conflicts. His evidence lies in the analysis of 3,208 cases of suicide occurring between 1938 and 1955 in soldiers or former soldiers of the German Army. Whereas in most studies of suicide certain factors have generally been found significant, e.g., marriage, number of children, time of year, constancy of occupation, no such relationship could be detected in these men. Close study of their records suggested very strongly that circumstances peculiar to the conditions of war as experienced in Germany far outweighed personal difficulties which might have operated at other times. The political situation before and during the war, the abominable duties some of the men were called on to perform, their hardships, and the chaos that followed military collapse and invasion were evidently unmistakable determinants of the suicidal act. The monograph contains much statistical information and informative comment. The author is aware of the inevitable defects in his material, but gives a convincing and detailed presentation of the weight of misery which evidently drove these men to suicide. The book can be read not only as a socio-medical document but as a tract for the times.


It is over 20 years since Henry Murray described his thematic apperception test. It has passed through the normal vicissitudes of a “projective” personality test, like its elder sister the Rorschach ink blot. Less is expected of it than in its golden youth, and there are many who doubt whether it can tell us more about a subject’s personality than can other varied samples of his verbal behaviour: interpretation is still too uncertain and dependent on the interpreter. Dr. Henry presents a sober and well organized account of the process of interpretation, as usually performed, followed by illustrative analyses, a study of the stimuli in each picture, and notes on the method of administration. There is also an ample bibliography. The chief defect of the book is that it does not examine the problems of validation: Dr. Henry, aware of this, hopes that he has provided a conceptual basis upon which studies of validity can be founded, but until an author has himself grasped the validation nettle he cannot claim to have guided his readers well through the thick undergrowth. It is a merit in this book that it keeps free of loose psycho-analytical speculation, focuses on the normal personality, and pays much heed to social and cultural influences.

Cerebral Palsy in Childhood. By Grace E. Woods. (Pp. xi + 158; 34 figures. 27s. 6d.) Bristol: John Wright. 1957.

This book consists chiefly of a clinical analysis of 300 children with cerebral palsy seen in the Bristol area. The pathological and physiological problems connected with this difficult subject are not given much consideration, nor are the problems of treatment discussed.
BOOK REVIEWS

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