BOOK REVIEWS


The production of this book may be regarded as the crowning achievement of the late Dr. Godwin Greenfield. Hitherto, there has been no comprehensive book of reference for neuropathologists in the English language. In German there is volume XIII of the Henke-Lubarsch Handbuch, for those with the money to buy it and the patience to use it; otherwise, one has to rely mainly on monographs and papers in scattered journals.

Over half this book is from the hand of Dr. Greenfield, who writes, learnedly and lucidly, on the general pathology of nerve cells and glia, infections, trauma, demyelinating diseases, syringomyelia, cerebello-spinal degenerations, peripheral neuropathies, and the effects of lesions of the skull and spinal column. There is a long and valuable chapter on vascular disease by Professor Blackwood, and an outstanding contribution by Dr. R. M. Norman on malformations and disease of early life. Professor A. Meyer deals with intoxications, metabolic disorders, epilepsy, and the pathology of psychosis. Dr. W. M. McMenemey writes on the organic dementias and diseases of the basal ganglia. The subject of tumours is omitted, as it is to be dealt with in a companion volume edited by Professor D. S. Russell.

The merits of a text-book reveal themselves in use. The present reviewer has been using this one for several months, with profit and pleasure. References are copious, but not too copious; the illustrations are really helpful, and excellently reproduced; and the index is less infuriating than most.


Lord Cohen was the fourth Sherrington lecturer in the University of Liverpool, and this book consists of his three lectures. His first lecture outlines Sherrington's life. The second lecture on Sherrington as physiologist is informative and well illustrated, and may stimulate the reader to refer to Sherrington's original works, especially "The Integrative Action of the Nervous System". Ground that is less familiar to neurologists is covered by the third lecture on Sherrington as philosopher and poet. Sherrington was a Cartesian dualist and like others was unable to answer the problems of the mind-body relationship. Lord Cohen suggests that the failure of successive generations to deal with these questions is an indication that as they have been asked they are meaningless, and that they must be reformulated before they become answerable. He clarifies this suggestion by apt illustrations.


The term chemotherapy suggests the use of drugs to combat infection. Professor McIlwain uses the word in a much wider sense and his text is the vast range of chemical compounds which influence the activity of the central nervous system. It is written primarily from the standpoint of a chemist and the inter-relations between various drugs and the principles which governed their development are most lucidly described. The biological meaning which can be extracted from a knowledge of their molecular structure is thereby illustrated.

The work of the past is extensively described and much out-of-the-way information is included. It is interesting to note the occurrence of names which are better known in other branches of medicine. Von Mering, for example, who with Minkowski discovered the role of the pancreas in blood sugar regulation, collaborated with Emil Fischer in work which resulted in the introduction of the barbiturates. Sigmund Freud with Kollar was responsible for the introduction of cocaine to ophthalmology.

This is an excellent book. It is broad in scope and the simple fact that several hundred active substances are considered illustrates the scope of neurological therapy.


This small monograph gives a valuable account of the metabolism of iron and copper, with special reference to research on haemochromatosis and hepato-cerebral degeneration. A list of over 400 references is provided.


The scope of neuro-ophthalmology is sometimes taken to include only the oculomotor nerves and the pathways from eye to visual cortex. These subjects, however, occupy only a small proportion of this massive book and the remainder is devoted to a wide variety of neurological disorders which may be associated with ophthalmic abnormalities. This involves sections on such diverse subjects as the presenile dementias, osteogenesis imperfecta, Arnold-Chiari deformity, and the Guillain-Barre syndrome. On debatable subjects the various points of view are stated individually and this is followed by the author's summarizing up. Most points are illustrated by case
BOOK REVIEWS

records from the author’s experience, and these are often given with engaging candour. The book can be thoroughly recommended to neurologists, and it is to be feared that few neurologists are as expert in ophthalmology as Dr. F. B. Walshe is in neurology.


The author is a teacher and practitioner of ophthalmology in the University of Indiana and also a qualified psychiatrist. He believes that “a hundred per cent” of eye cases involve emotional conflict and as a corollary, “the true psychosomatic approach” is necessary for proper treatment. This approach is in the prevailing American dynamic tradition. The author believes that the eye may represent symbolically either the male or female genitals (the penis, for example, being represented by “the hypothetical beam emanating from the pupil”). The entire face may also represent the male genital area, the eyebrows representing the pubic hair, the nose the penis, and the eyes, in this particular analogy, the testes. The forehead can be used as an equivalent for the eye, and symbolize the same anatomical regions. These hypotheses are buttressed by evidence from Greek mythology and the citation of some curious practices of the Austrian peasantry. If one accepts these hypotheses the door would seem to be wide open for a plethora of fantasy, but the author does not grasp his opportunity and the rest of the book consists mainly of hysteria discussed on an anatomical basis, with chapters on neurology, dermatology, headache, and general medicine in so far as they affect the eye.


This small volume contains the proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons held in Chicago in November, 1956. It is dedicated to Dr. Wilder Penfield, O.M., of Montreal, but apart from two papers by Dr. Penfield together with his bibliography and a short biography, it is really a symposium on pituitary surgery. The first of Dr. Penfield’s contributions is an account of the life and times of Hippocrates based upon material gained during his two visits to the island of Cos. The second is some thoughts on the function of the temporal cortex, and summarizes his observations on perceptual illusions and experimental hallucinations published in other papers. It contains two statements that, if confirmed by a larger documentation, are new and important, viz., that auditory illusions and the feeling of fear may be produced by discharges in the temporal cortex of either side, whereas visual illusions and déjà vu sensations are generally produced by discharges in the temporal cortex of the non-dominant hemisphere.

Six papers by various authors portray various aspects of pituitary surgery. The first three by Drs. C. W. Rucker, J. D. Camp, and J. G. Love—all of the Mayo Clinic—deal respectively with ophthalmological, radiological, and operative aspects. They follow more or less standard teaching and indicate that at their clinic most patients with failing vision are submitted to surgery. Then follows a somewhat provocative article by the late Dr. Gilbert Horrax reporting the results in 95 patients treated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a two-million volt radiotherapy apparatus using a rotational method of application and delivering a tumour dose of 4,000 r. The results are compared with his earlier experiences at the Lahey Clinic of operative treatment with or without the more conventional forms of deep x-ray therapy. He found that with the two-million volt apparatus only 12% of patients with impaired vision failed to respond to radiotherapy compared with 58% previously. Admittedly the follow-up period of these more recent cases is only one to six years, but the results indicated that a more prolonged trial of this new therapy is necessary.

The two concluding papers discuss succinctly the treatment of metastatic breast cancer by surgical hypophysectomy. The first of these by Dr. B. S. Ray describes the surgical technique and summarizes the operative results, while the last by Dr. O. H. Pearson discusses the physiological effects of the operation. A feature of all the papers is the edited report of the discussions from the floor. The monograph can be commended to all who want a short account of the present status of pituitary surgery.


In this study the author discusses various congenital, degenerative, and inflammatory anomalies of the spine, with special reference to occupational prophylaxis. Special emphasis is laid on Scheuermann’s disease, spina bifida, butterfly vertebra, and haemangioma of the spine.

There is no doubt that these vertebral anomalies may represent risks for employment in certain occupations, and the author rightly draws attention to the great value of clinical, as well as x-ray, examinations for the selection of suitable candidates for certain industries and professions, such as physical gymnastics, nursing, and also for recruiting for military service.


It is customary and reasonable to demand that the natural history of a disease should be determined before any attempt is made to assess the value of therapeutic interference. Neglect of this requirement has led to faulty conclusions, notably in regard to the treatment of mental illness. The natural history of mental illness is, however, very hard to determine, not least because its ascertainment and its forms and frequency depend on social factors. The extent of this dependence is documented by the thorough and sophisticated Maudsley
BOOK REVIEWS

monograph by Dr. Shepherd. Examining the patients admitted to a county mental hospital in the two triennia 1931-33 and 1945-47, he records striking changes. In the later period more patients were admitted (but the first admission rate was lower and the readmission rate higher than in the earlier period); the outlook for patients with affective disorder, especially women, was better; and even patients with organic and senile psychoses spent less time in hospital. Dr. Shepherd interprets these changes as being due to the impact of social and legislative measures, the admission of patients at an earlier stage of their illness or with a more responsive form of illness, and the introduction of new forms of treatment; the last of these, however, is not, in his reasoned view, the dominant factor in reducing the duration of stay for patients with non-organic psychoses. There have been very few studies such as this: they are needed, for it casts light upon many controversial questions that are of moment not only to the psychiatrist but also to the public health administrator and the sociologist.


Future historians of psychiatry may label this the “palaver period”. Never before have psychiatrists come together so often with experts in other branches of knowledge—psychology, sociology, anatomy, physiology, genetics, biochemistry, anthropology, statistics, and neurology—to discuss each other’s ideas, methods, and joint potentialities. These conferences, bewilderingly discursive and ragged, nevertheless provide those who attend them with stimulating fresh concepts and widen their horizon. Whether the transcripts of the discussion, which it is now customary to publish, serve the same excellent purpose for readers is extremely doubtful. At worst they excite surprise that such able men can on occasion be so muddled or one-eyed, and at best they confirm the suspicion that talk about complex unresolved problems is likely to be at cross purposes unless the people engaged in it have some common ground, set fourth clearly at the outset, and understand each other’s private language.

Forty-eight representatives of psychiatry and other subjects attended the two New York conferences here reported. All but six of the participants were American or Canadian; 23 were psychiatrists. At the first conference the principles and bases of four major approaches to mental disease—organic, experimental psychological, psycho-analytical, and social—were presented, and areas of agreement sought. None of the exponents claimed exclusive value for the approach he preferred in his research or his practice. In the second conference the psychodynamic approach was clearly seen to be least reconcilable with the organic or experimental viewpoint; difficulties of communication and diversity of method were chiefly responsible for this lack of common ground.

The reader of this handsomely produced volume oscillates between admiration for the intelligent, exceptionally well-informed and perceptive contributions made when the participants were dealing with their own field of knowledge and dismay at the wordy labyrinths into which they wandered or scurried when they came up against age-old problems (such as the permanence of values, or the essential nature of the scientific method) or ventured into assumptions and arguments concerning subject matter unfamiliar to them. The problems of interdisciplinary research are probably better solved ambulando than by discussion, even between such notable scientists and clinicians as were assembled at these two conferences.


This book is one of a series of therapeutic manuals. In a long and interesting preface Professor Huyer, the doyen in France of the psychiatry of childhood, explains that schoolteachers and psychologists have made inadmissible claims to diagnose and treat maladjusted children, and he elaborates the grounds on which these responsibilities should fall predominantly on the clinician, working in association with teacher and psychologist. The medical standpoint which he commends is conspicuous in Professor Michaux and Dr. Dupre’s manual. It is written in the manner of a simple textbook: statements tend to be dogmatic and unqualified, argument is eschewed, and there are no detailed references to the literature of the subject. It is, however, clearly arranged and presented. The therapeutic guidance offered is mostly terse and empirical.


Delirium tremens, as part of the general problem of alcoholism, is a not uncommon condition in France. It has been the subject of considerable clinical and biochemical study in the past decade. This small monograph reviews the work of its senior authors particularly in the biochemical field. They say in the preface “L’ion K dominerà le travai” and in conclusion state that a trial of changes in potassium ion distribution—lowered concentration in blood and urine and raised concentration in cells—constitutes a basic mechanism in delirium tremens. This abnormality they can readily correct by cortisone or better still by 21-hydroxy-pregnandione-sodium succinate. If their clinical results are correctly observed and reported it would certainly seem that these authors have found a rapid and dramatic cure for acute delirium tremens.


This book stresses a psychoanalytical theory of pain, but this becomes hardly understandable when an attempt is made to explain the appearance of a phantom limb pain as “a return of the denied” (p. 159). There is, in fact, conclusive evidence that the neuronal discharge which provokes phantom sensations usually originates in the nerves of the stump, and not in the “psychic structure”, wherever that may be.