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it needed only the definition of the ultrastructure of the junctional region by the electron microscope to explore the electrophysiologist's findings at the molecular level and to disclose the mechanisms of neuromuscular disease.

This short monograph gives a full account of the previous studies on the histology and experimental pathology of the neuromuscular junction and a sufficient, though limited, discussion of the electrophysiological data to suggest that the time has now come to make the synthesis. Unfortunately, it must be concluded that the book is a little premature. From the author's own excellent work it is evident that electron micrography is subject to serious artefacts, even in the hands of experts, and it is still too early to accept any findings as definitive. The author has made important contributions to the study of tetanus, botulism, and myasthenia gravis by electron microscopy of the motor endplate but his conclusions are tentative. One feels that this work is so near its goal as to wish that publication had been postponed for a little while. Nevertheless, all workers in the field of neuromuscular disease will welcome the detailed account of earlier work, including significant papers published as lately as 1963. There is a useful appendix on staining methods, and on methods of electron microscopic study of endplates.

The book is beautifully illustrated and the publishers are to be congratulated on producing this elegant volume with the minimum of delay.

J. A. SIMPSON


Professor Ludwig's latest edition of Villiger's Die Peripherie Innervation deserves a warm welcome from neurologists. There are few English textbooks which contain both clinical illustrations of neurological patients and such detailed treatment of the anatomy of peripheral nerves. There is also a brief account of the histology of peripheral nerve, including results of recent research in electron-microscopy. It is clear that a great deal of trouble has been taken to keep this famous and respected textbook up to date.

R. W. GILLIATT


This book is a record of papers presented at a conference on mechanisms of demyelination which was held at UCLA in 1962, under the sponsorship of the UCLA Brain Research Institute and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The principal speakers at this conference were well chosen to cover the subject from a wide range of approaches, and the volume opens with a well illustrated chapter by F. S. Sjöstrand on the structure and function of the myelin sheath. The chemistry of myelin and the various biochemical approaches to different forms of demyelination are briefly described by J. N. Cumings. It is clear, however, that it was immunology and its applications to at any rate certain types of demyelinating disease that occupied the centre of the stage at this conference. Two chapters, by Carl M. Pearson and Robert A. Good, are devoted to fundamental considerations of immunology and immunological mechanisms. As is to be expected, recent work on experimental allergic encephalomyelitis is dealt with fully, and a whole chapter by Abner Wolf compares and contrasts spontaneous human and experimental simian demyelinating diseases.

As a survey of the status in 1962 of immunological work in this field this book is to be recommended, as it contains much information and critical thought. It is a pity perhaps that other approaches did not receive equal attention, but, as the authors admit, the book does not make any claims to completeness. It is well produced and the illustrations on the whole are good. It is, in short, a volume that should certainly be of value to all who are working in this field.

R. H. S. THOMPSON


This volume, now in its 12th edition, is useful to those beginning the study of neurology and has proved to be popular with students and medical practitioners.


This volume reports a conference held four years ago. It was organized by Drs. Schaltenbrand and Bay, who felt that a meeting of experienced clinicians should consider and discuss the newer physiological knowledge of brain mechanisms. The discussion which followed each paper is fully reported and makes an interesting and stimulating feature of this presentation.


The development of electron microscopy leads to the consideration of entirely new problems regarding the correlation of structure, function, and biochemistry. This volume collects the work of nearly 30 students of this new science.


This volume contains 19 lectures given at a symposium held at the University of Kiel. The predominant theme is that of the ultrastructure of the nervous system, Ranvier's nodes in central fibres and inter-neuronal contact sites receiving special attention and are well illustrated. However, other subjects, such as the mechanism of extensor rigidity in asphyxia of the spinal cord, the central representation of sleep, and recent advances in paleoneurology, are also included.
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This is the second volume of collected papers by Lord Brain on a variety of medical subjects. Some are simply pleasant 'pièces d'occasion', but some achieve genuine essay form, that most difficult genre. The book is illustrated with attractive drawings by Norman Smith.

In 'Neurology Past and Present' we are given vignettes of great figures (some will be personally known to his readers) embellished with those small side lights on personality that were a feature of 'Tea with Walter de la Mare' and which will remain valuable candles for the future biographer or historian.

The two short papers on William Harvey display him once more with a mind alert, curious and well endowed, with the logic of observation under controlled conditions. Aubrey's gossip of the day gives us a telling and human picture and incidentally brings forward a rival originator for the circulation of the blood; but with Harvey's intellectual stature before us Mr. Walter Warner's claims cannot be viewed as part of that 'inequity of oblivion that blindly scattereth her poppies'.

In 'The Diagnosis of Genius' the author returns to the theme of his earlier volume. There the problem was exemplified. Here he handles the central question with assurance and widely ranging interest. The rather two-dimensional approach to criticism which C. S. Lewis surprisingly stood for, will not appeal to those who welcomed the impact 25 years ago of Edmund Wilson's early essays. They added an exhilarating depth and reality to the subject. Lord Brain is on the side of the more full and rounded approach to genius, most of which has perforce to be judged by its remains. He argues the case convincingly.

Perhaps one of the most topical and also perennial subjects is 'The Need for a Philosophy of Medicine'. The theme is touched on also in other papers. We live in an age when an older philosophy and its assumptions are no longer readily applicable. Like Mr. Carlyle's church clothes, they are sometimes sorrowfully out-at-elbows. It is our good fortune to have to think afresh as these essays will help us to do.

The book will be of interest to many. It should be recommended especially to the beginner in medicine if only because it shows that the discipline of medicine is not a straitjacket. If education is opening windows on the world then for the educable medicine still bids fair to be the best of liberal educations.

C. W. M. WHITTY


Illustrations provide an admirable way of visualizing a pathological process whether it be in the primary assimilation of knowledge or for purposes of revision. The advantage of polychrome photography is that the colours are permanent, contrasting with those of museum specimens and histological preparations both of which are wont to fade. While many of the reproductions in this atlas are of good quality, there are others that are not agreeable whether viewed in daylight, fluorescent light, or common electric light. Some of the colours are dull and unsuitable; for instance, the student will experience difficulty in finding the plaques in the caudal end of the brain depicted from a case of multiple sclerosis and one wonders what advantage is gained in visualizing a gummata in so unfortunate a colour as has been chosen for the purpose.

In the histological preparations counter-stains are too heavy, so that nuclear detail is obscured. Nissl's stain, designed to tone down the intricacies of the neuropil, seems in fact to have been seldom employed. It is true that some special stains have been utilized, but the results are not always pleasing. Some of the photomicrographs are not sharp and one is decidedly out of focus. The captions could with advantage be more detailed and arrows would help in the identification of some of the cells, as for instance the microglia on page 260. The anatomical diagrams are excellent and most useful. An admirable feature of this book is that diseases are mostly treated on the basis of individual case histories, a method that is particularly suitable when the reader wishes to refresh his memory. The accompanying text is reduced to the minimum but is not without inaccuracies.


This book is concerned with the cause, cure, and prevention of post-lumbar puncture headache. A historical introduction considers the various views put forward on aetiology and treatment. The authors conclude that views vary widely and factual evidence is scanty. They describe the syndrome in 24 normal volunteers, but the time range and general clinical accompaniments are narrower than are met with in clinical practice. They find the syndrome more common in neurological diagnosis than after spinal anaesthetics. However they seem unaware of the difficulties of comparing these two disparate settings, just as they appear to think it is useful to quote from many past publications when, on their own admission, factual data are often entirely lacking.

What does not appear very clearly from the monograph is that inexperienced operators, blunt and large-bore needles, and immediate post-operative activity in patients, all appear to increase incidence, that complaints (as opposed to occurrence) of post-lumbar puncture headaches are infectious and psychogenic features often operate, and, on the other hand, that attention to these details when the incidence has become high in a ward will always sharply reduce it. They suggest that the extradural leak theory of aetiology is one of several, but produce no evidence for others, and no evidence that is not strictly compatible with this one, which is in fact very generally accepted. Indeed, the book makes a mysterious mountain out of a fairly well mapped mole-hill; from the preface more seems to be promised.
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C. W. M. Whitty

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