
Derek Denny-Brown’s contribution to Anglo-American neurology has been unique, and it is only now, after his retirement from Boston City Hospital, that our full indebtedness to his leadership becomes evident. He was already an established authority as a young neurophysiologist when he turned seriously to clinical neurology in 1929, and his life-long habit thereafter has been to consider every case as both a clinical and a physiological challenge. He seemed to require little sleep and owing partly to his remarkable capacity for long hours of intensive work he succeeded in himself combining three major careers as a clinician, a research physiologist, and a teacher. In Boston from 1941 onwards, Denny-Brown has trained and inspired about 170 neurologists who now operate all over the world, and who in their turn are helping to ensure that American neurology continues to provide the best training there is to be had in this subject.

This volume is a wonderful testimonial to this great teacher and contains nearly 50 papers from 60 of his former students and colleagues, many of which reflect Denny-Brown’s drive and dedication to the advancement of knowledge.

The volume has been edited with distinction by Dr. Simeon Locke and all neurologists will hope to acquire a copy. It is gratifying to know that Denny-Brown, although retired from the clinic, is to continue his physiological researches, and for these all his associates and friends will join to wish him every satisfaction and success.

W. RITCHIE RUSSELL


No introduction is required to this excellent French paperback series of neurophysiological reviews by distinguished contributors. The eighth volume contains 15 papers. Barker reviews motor nerve endings (intra- and extrafusal) and Granit discusses the control of motoneurone firing. On the sensory side, carotid chemoreceptors are reviewed by Eyzaguirre and Zapata, a mechanoreceptor by Szabo, and transmission of muscle stretch signals in spinocerebellar tracts by Jansen. Gordon has some interesting ideas on central mechanisms of somesthetic nuclei. Chalazonitis discusses the role of intracellular oxygen in the control of the electrical properties of the nerve cell membrane. EEG workers will welcome Brazier on the electrophysiology of the human hippocampus and thalamus, Bureš and Burešová on cortical spreading depression, and Naquet and colleagues on a baboon model for the study of epilepsy. Neuroendocrinology is catered for by Perl on medullary sympathetic reflexes, Faure on the effects of sleep and waking on gonadotrophic function, and Feldman on the cerebral effects of adrenalectomy and corticosteroids. Cerf gives a useful account of functional studies of the cerebral effects of various antibodies.

The price rises steadily with each volume, but contemporary assessments by the leading workers in many fields of neurophysiology make this excellent series a ‘good buy’. There are summaries of each chapter in English.

J. A. SIMPSON


Some consider that conditioned reflexes are of prime importance in understanding the mechanisms of higher nervous control. On the basis of apparently simple physiological experiments an elaborate system of thought has been erected. It has even been claimed that our ‘voluntary’ actions are merely conditioned reflexes. This view is a guess or perhaps one should rather say an absurd and ludicrous extrapolation.

In the East at least conditioned reflexes continue to attract a great deal of interest and studies inspired by Pavlov’s work early in the century continue to occupy scientists in Russia and Eastern European countries. By contrast an analysis of the indices of the Journal of Physiology confirms how little interest these responses have elicited in experimentalists in the West.

This book, from East Germany, deals with the electroencephalogram in relation to conditioned reflexes of different types established in rats. Readings were successfully obtained from implanted electrodes in freely moving animals. The results are interpreted in terms of a three-phase hypothesis. There are stages of disturbance, adaptation, and good adaptation. It is surprising to see (Fig. 46) that the startle reaction to pistol shot may be seen with no electroencephalographic ‘arousal’.

This work is in the nature of a collection of data about the responses of different cortical regions using macro electrodes. No single unit records are shown. The work is of only limited interest to clinical neurologists.

E. GEOFFREY WALSH


The cause of motor neurone disease is unknown. There is no effective treatment. Yet research into this unpromising condition was boosted by the recognition of an inherited form in the Mariana Islands soon after the war.

The relationship between motor neurone disease and many of the disorders encompassed in this recently
published symposium is distant. Kuru, scrapie, and various afflictions of mouse and ape are described together with their experimental transmission. The original meeting was incidentally supported in part by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Inc. However, these fringe topics comprise the most stimulating part of the collection. There are useful summaries of neuronal and axonal responses to toxins and trauma and reviews of neuron histochemistry and electron microscopy, which are easily accessible to the non-specialist. The scope of the symposium is perhaps belied by its title, but potential readers should not be discouraged by this. They should, however, ensure that the book is properly bound, as the review copy had 30 pages of text missing.

Ivan T. Draper


This is a statistical report on more than 300 servicemen who were assessed, most of them by direct examination, from 10 to 15 years after being injured in the second world war. One intention was to compare those with and without epilepsy in respect of other persisting sequelae and consequently two-thirds of the series had had at least one fit; the remaining third were matched for type and severity of injury with the epileptic group. The whole series is therefore biased towards severe injuries, as the authors explain.

The internal analysis of the epilepsy group is of interest; the type of attack is correlated with neurological deficits, post-traumatic syndrome, EEG and socio-economic adjustment, and the frequency of remission (about 50% after five years) is explored. The remaining chapters consist rather of a catalogue of the 'constellation of griefs' (the authors' felicitous phrase) complained of by these men. After listing the incidence and cross-correlation between the various factors of the post-traumatic syndrome, neurological deficits (including mental impairment), and socio-economic status, the literature on each is very briefly reviewed. But seldom is the contrast or similarity between the authors' series and those previously reported emphasized nor is a critical argument allowed to develop. Perhaps the chief value of the book will therefore be as a source of data for future investigators, who may be bold enough to risk some speculation. The attempt to compare the five year status with that at 10 to 15 years is made only for certain features, but on the whole the authors' conclusion was that there was little improvement after the fifth year, but very little deterioration either. It is characteristic of its American origin that this study should assess socio-economic status by the driving and drinking habits of the men as well as by their occupational success.


This excellent clinical atlas should find a valuable place in many departmental medical libraries. It has obvious lessons for neurologists, paediatricians, and geneticists and should also interest ophthalmologists, otorhinolaryngologists, and plastic surgeons. The author chose a formidable task when he endeavoured to tidy up this jungle zone of borderland neurology. In discerning 70 clinical categories of craniofacial anomalies with neurological defects, he has completed a worthwhile enterprise.

His classification is necessarily a general and descriptive one, for little is known of aetiology. If one knew what agents were responsible for disturbance of the first visceral arch, for example, which has much to do with the development of the middle and lower face, light would be thrown on a number of facial deformities. In other categories the embryological derivatives are not focally involved; there may be many types of distal anomalies. Genetic transmission and chromosomal defects play a part in some examples.

Professor Aita has combed the literature and presented his observations in the lucid manner we have enjoyed in his two previous books, Neurologic Manifestations of General Diseases and Neurocutaneous Diseases. There is a classified bibliography of 64 pages and, taken with the summaries and illustrations of the 70 syndromes he describes, the reader in search of information in this field would almost certainly find it. Indeed, he would probably find himself diverted from his initial search and turning the pages with increasing interest—which is one sign of a good book.

J. D. Spillane


This short monograph deals with the mechanisms and management of migraine, and is designed for the use and information of the practising physician. The general physician will be concerned with management and diagnosis. Management is dealt with rather briefly. In the specific treatment of the attack, ergotamine derivatives are rightly mentioned as the mainstay; but for 'interval treatment', methysergide, which is now recognized as playing an important but limited part in prophylaxis, is almost the only drug discussed. In diagnosis the common, and some less common, variants are usefully discussed, and some complications mentioned.

The neurologist will be able to draw on his own views and experience on management and will be more interested in evidence for the aetiology and mechanism of migraine. These are briefly reviewed in the earlier chapters of the book. In this context, the definition of migraine as a single entity becomes important, but the author, perhaps wisely, evades this difficult issue. The pattern of the migraine attack is considered in terms of mechanisms and the biochemical and vascular background is discussed in terms of aetiology. Assessment of biochemical findings is a little uncritical at times; but references are given to the original papers by which the interested reader can guide his views. The book gives a useful introduction to an important subject.

C. W. M. Whitty
