Book reviews

Mandeville—the application of sterile operation theatre technique to repeated catherization. Bors and Rossier now report that their research into the reflexes arising in the mucosa of the urethra and bladder and affecting the detrusor and the pelvic floor have led them to use the anaesthetizing of bladder and/or rectal mucosa to obtain micturition in some cases of paraplegia. Anaesthesia of the urethral mucosa can be used to increase the bladder capacity, to relax the detrusor and the pelvic floor, and to diminish the amount of residual urine. The function of the sphincters of the anus and urethra in normal micturition was investigated and reported on by Allert and Jelasic. Electric stimulation was reported on by Burghhe and Ichim from Budapest, Graber and Rutishauser from Basel, Potempa from Heidelberg, and Caldwell from Exeter. The Hungarian workers stimulate the pelvic nerves, Potempa stimulates the detrusor, and Caldwell the external sphincter of the urethra. These communications are followed by a report of the subsequent rewarding discussion.

P. W. NATHAN


This volume contains the 70 papers which were presented at the Third European Congress of Neurosurgery, which was held in Madrid in 1967.

About half the papers are devoted to fundamental studies on the anatomy, physiology, pathology, and methodology of the cerebral circulation. The remainder deal with various aspects of occlusive vascular lesions and aneurysms and will be of most interest to the clinical neurosurgeon.

Many of the papers in the section on fundamental studies of the cerebral circulation will already be familiar to those who have read the reports of the international conferences on cerebral blood flow held in Scandinavia and elsewhere in recent years. However, the combination of basic studies and clinical papers which are presented in this volume should be of great value to the young neurosurgeon.

The volume is beautifully produced and the material is well presented.

A. MURRAY HARPER


In this well-produced monograph Professor Zapletal gives an interesting account of his experiences in the surgical treatment of intractable pain during the past 20 years. He describes the current theories on transmission of pain impulses and the consequences of intractable pain on the patient. This is a fairly uncritical review and includes, without comment, certain theories which are now out of fashion, but the account of the anatomy and physiology of pain pathways will be of interest to anyone involved in this type of work and there is a comprehensive bibliography. For certain practical reasons stereotaxic surgery has not been developed in this clinic and as an alternative an open infra-tentorial approach to the mesencephalon and posterior thalamus has been developed. The writer has used this technique in the treatment of extra-pyramidal disease and intractable pain but only the latter subject is dealt with in this monograph. Recent work on percutaneous cordotomy, which would almost certainly modify the writer's views on the treatment of intractable pain, is not mentioned. He reports the results of 24 open mesencephalic operations on 18 patients between 1955 and 1957. Fourteen patients between 1958 and 1960 were operated on by open mesencephalothalamotomy by destruction of the spino-thalamic tract at the junction of the mesencephalon and the thalamus. Subsequently, a total of 30 open thalamotomies for intractable pain on 22 patients were performed. The results described are similar to other series and certainly compare well with stereotaxic surgery. The immediate results of operation are gratifying, with an increasing incidence of recurrence with the passage of time, depending on the length of survival. A high proportion of these patients were in the terminal stages of malignancy. Professor Zapletal's view that the open operation, under direct vision, is more accurate than stereotaxic surgery is not altogether convincing and is reminiscent of the declaration that 'surgery is more of an art than a science.' However, this description of his experiences is well worth study and is recommended to all those interested in the subject.

JOHN HANKINSON


This is not a textbook on viral diseases of the CNS, but it is an elegant survey of some of the advancing areas of knowledge about the role of viruses in neurology, with particular reference to herpes simplex encephalitis, 'slow' and latent virus infections, and subacute sclerosing panencephalitis. The book contains papers and discussions from a symposium in Oxford in 1968. It is strongly recommended for the insight it gives into many concepts which may be new to the clinical neurologist. It is very well produced, and a pleasure to read.

J. A. SIMPSON


This book of 80 pages is very well printed with a considerable number of Tables and illustrations. The main problem is to understand why and for whom this book was written. The author presumes that the term parasyasmal dysrhythmia is a universally accepted entity. However, in his illustration of EEG features it is difficult to understand what should be included and what should be excluded of all the varieties of possible EEG changes. In the first four illustrations of EEGs there is no indication as to either electrode placement or montages. The Tables are very clear but it is difficult to understand their relationship to the main aim of the book. The German terminology is difficult to understand as
some of the terms are not universally accepted. The mathematical explanations of a number of functions are expressed in a way which will remain obscure to the majority of physicians in Great Britain without 'A' level in maths. The substantial bibliography of nine pages (408 quotations) covers miscellaneous subjects about practically anything from frequency analysis to EEG studies in the dumping syndrome or in patients with neurosyphilis.

There is no summary in English and the index is rather limited. The briefly summarized reports of 20 patients contain no illustrations as to what the author wishes to describe as 'basal dysrythmia', 'paroxysmal dysrythmia', 'Parenrhymie', 'background rhythms' etc. The author, however, must have taken a tremendous lot of trouble to prepare his data, Tables, and histograms.


Cerebrovascular disease is now the third largest cause of death in the developed countries of the world and as such has evoked increasing interest. Not least among the aspects studied are those of the epidemiology and natural history of this condition. In this useful book Dr. Kurtzke has gathered published data from all over the world and subjected them to critical analysis. In so doing, he has provided a valuable source book and exploded at least two myths—namely, that cerebrovascular disease is commoner among American negroes than among whites, and that cerebral haemorrhage is more frequent in Japan than other forms of vascular disease. It is not so much the exploding of the myths that is important as the illustration of how these false trails can arise in epidemiological work.

Criticism may be levelled at the section on statistical methods, for if, as appears to be the case, it was written for those without statistical knowledge, it is too cursory to be of help to them. Apart from this, the book is packed with relevant data, much contained in tabular form in an appendix of 50 pages. There is a useful summary of the chapters which permits the conclusions to stand out from their supporting numerical data and an exhaustive bibliography with over 400 items. This book will, therefore, be of great value to all interested in cerebrovascular disease.


The clinical examination of the nervous system has not fundamentally altered over many years. Differences in interpretation of abnormalities have developed, and the greatest advances have been in the technology of ancillary methods of investigation, which have transformed the accuracy of diagnosis. The bedside examination, however, is still badly performed by those not accustomed to the art, and it is probably for this reason that a number of books are available on the subject, varying more in their size, detail, and price, than in the content of their reading matter. This latest book describes the conventional methods of examination in a conventional manner, using as illustrations a large number of excellent drawings instead of photographs which may often lose clarity in reproduction. After giving the important points in history taking, the author deals with the technique of examination, and then, in a separate section, with the interpretation of abnormal findings. Some will find this irritating for it results in a lot of repetition and requires frequent cross-reference to future or past pages. The descriptions are clear, filled with useful hints, most of which are familiar to the experienced neurologist, but can be a great help to the physician who has to perform these tasks less frequently. Unfortunately, in the descriptions of the abnormalities, the drawings often fall short of the visual impact given by a photograph. The order in which the examination is carried out varies a little from that usually recommended, but corresponds to what the clinician often in fact does in practice. For instance classifying the pupils and their reactions in the examination of the optic nerve may seem a little odd to some, but I suspect many of us do test pupil reactions at this stage. There is a very short section on the examination of the unconscious patient; a longer one on the examination of babies, but not on the interpretation of abnormal findings (wisely perhaps); and brief sections on mental tests and dysphasia. The latter is simplified to three short pages, which will not satisfy those who have struggled with the problem for years. Finally there is a section on the performance of caloric tests and lumbar puncture, but there is nothing on the use of the ancillary services. The book represents a gallant attempt to give a visual picture to the senior student or hospital resident of the main steps in neurological examination, and it is a very good attempt, but one wonders why the publishers chose to produce it in such an awkward oblong shape, which fits neither the pocket nor the bookshelf comfortably.

E. R. BICKERSTAFF


The 1967 Sherrington lecture at Liverpool continues in the illustrious tradition of its nine predecessors. The intracellular electrode and the micropipette with ionophoretic injection have unravelled the main threads of the fabric of the neuromuscular junction and a major part of the new understanding has been due to the technical ingenuity and conceptual brilliance of Katz and his school. The lecture is a valuable review of the background to the theory of quantal release of acetylcholine, moving to more recent work on the importance of calcium in synaptic transmission. In a final Commentary the author discusses terminology, answers criticisms, and animadvert on general properties of synaptic transmission, but, despite the title, this is actually a review of neuromuscular transmission. In this field it is a valuable though brief summary.

J. A. SIMPSON
Book Reviews

E. R. Bickerstaff

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