

siastic about it. The *Atlas* will no doubt find its way into a great many libraries and laboratories, but I doubt if it will be consulted often.

J. HUME ADAMS

DEMENTIA By Charles E. Wells. (Pp. 239; illustrated; £5.) Blackwell Scientific Publications: Oxford, 1972.

This book lives up to the high standard of the *Contemporary Neurology* series. It is a sound and diverse exposition of the subject of dementia and despite the numbers of contributors there is very little repetition. A few chapters are padded to give a balanced appearance to the book. I have little doubt that it will be standard reading for those training in neurology and psychiatry. Perhaps the only comment might be that the section on normal pressure hydrocephalus might be enlarged as this is a cause of dementia for which treatment is available and occasionally successful.

The clinical chapters are complete and sensible, and the other chapters of great interest, even if they are not of immediate practical concern.

J. D. H. MILLAR

THE GENETICS OF MENTAL DISORDERS By Eliot Slater and Valerie Cowie. (Pp. 413; illustrated; £5.50.) Oxford University Press: London, 1971.

This book, written by two leading authorities, is primarily designed for clinical psychiatrists. The authors hope that it will also prove useful to many in allied specialties. The introduction provides a clear and concise account of the main genetic principles and is followed by coverage, in turn, of each of the major groups of mental disorders. A review of the recent literature for each group is coupled with a discussion of current ideas in the field.

Monogenic or polygenic hypotheses still remain a point of controversy in many of these disorders. The authors favour a single autosomal gene model in the case of schizophrenia, but a polygenic model in the case of the affective psychoses. The evidence is still largely epidemiological and until a biochemical basis for these disorders is defined it seems unlikely that the controversy will be satisfactorily resolved.

When discussing genetic counselling, the authors state that they feel the counsellor should make clear to prospective parents not only the genetic risks *but also the ethical issues involved*. This is a view not universally shared amongst geneticists in this country, many of whom believe that their function is mainly to discuss genetic risks.

Despite much recent progress in the field of mental subnormality, the child with 'non-specific' mental retardation remains a serious problem to paediatricians and genetic counsellors. The authors

discuss this topic in relation to the idea of a Gaussian variation in intelligence, indicating how '... preponderantly important the genetical factors are'. However, empiric figures for idiopathic mental subnormality are not discussed, which is unfortunate, since the much-quoted comparatively low risks given by Penrose have recently been challenged by Reed in the United States.

Inevitably in writing about a rapidly developing field, by the time of publication, the information given will be out of date in some places. In the section on metabolic defects, for example, the specific enzyme deficiencies in the sphingolipidoses have now been well defined.

Altogether the book presents a very comprehensive and well balanced discussion of the current genetic hypotheses in the field of mental disorders.

ROSALIND SKINNER

NOTICES

CLINICAL NEUROLOGY INFORMATION CENTER, NEBRASKA This centre was established in March 1972 at the University of Nebraska College of Medicine under the auspices of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke. This is the third of a series of information centres in the NINDS Neurological Information Network; Brain Information Service is at UCLA and the Information Center for Hearing, Speech and Disorders of Human Communication is at Johns Hopkins. The initial activities of CNIC will be the publication of state-of-the-art papers; these will be critical reviews of topics of interest to neurologists, neurosurgeons, and other clinical neuroscientists. Information about CNIC may be obtained from: Director, Clinical Neurology Information Center, Medical Library, University of Nebraska College of Medicine, Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A. 68105.

8TH CONGRESS OF ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY AND CLINICAL NEUROPHYSIOLOGY 1-7 September 1973, Marseilles. Free communications. Round Tables: 'Possibilities and limitations of new methods of data collection and analysis', 'Basic mechanisms of epilepsy', 'Computer analysis of EMG', 'Histopathology of nerve and electrophysiological correlations', 'Clinical neurophysiology of speech' (including mechanisms of reading and writing). Official languages: French and English. Inquiries to Congress Secretary, Mme le Dr. G. C. Lairy, Hôpital Henri Rousselle, 1 rue Cabanis, Paris 14^e, France.