THE NERVOUS SYSTEM By Peter Nathan. (Pp. 391, illustrated, 10s.) Pelican Book A985. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth. 1969.

It is a pleasure to recommend a book on the nervous system written for the general reader but with a scientific content and insight which gives it a claim to the attention of professionally trained readers. Its suitability for the general public must be judged by non-specialized reviewers. I find it is the perfect book to recommend to intelligent people who realize that twentieth-century man cannot consider himself educated without some awareness of the essentials of physical and biological science. The book is particularly suitable for those training in the therapies and diagnostic techniques ancillary to neurology, but it would also be valuable background reading for medical students and for practitioners requiring a refresher course. I am sure many neurologists will find facts they were not aware of, as Dr. Nathan, a well-known research neurologist at Queen Square, has skillfully incorporated the results of very recent research, including some comparative neurophysiology, which will certainly be unfamiliar to most readers. He is to be congratulated on producing such a good book without losing his readers in a maze of technical jargon.

J. A. SIMPSON

QUECKENSTEDT'S TEST By J. P. W. F. Lakke. Pp. vii + 194; 61 figures; £6. 6s.) Excerpta Medica: Amsterdam. 1969.

The main purpose of this monograph is to evaluate an electromanometric technique of recording cerebrospinal fluid pressure changes.

The results of 104 examinations are presented in meticulous detail. The method is found to be more sensitive than standard manometry in detecting intermittent subarachnoid obstruction, but the author sadly concludes that the need to utilize this technique in neurological diagnosis appears to possess only a limited clinical validity.

For this reason, as well as others—the volume of raw data being somewhat daunting, for example—clinicians will find this book heavy going despite its attractive presentation. Physiologists with special interest may find it of greater interest but perhaps the substance of this monograph could have been conveyed more economically, verbally as well as financially, and to a wider audience in the form of one or more communications to a journal.

A. W. DOWNIE

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES FOR NEUROLOGIC DIAGNOSIS Edited by James F. Toole. (Pp. x + 226; illustrated; 47s.) Blackwell: Oxford. 1969.

This attractively produced book presents an abridged account of a selection of those investigations which are now part of the routine neurological service. The choice of topics reflects the interests of the contributors from the Bowman Gray School of Medicine and is far from comprehensive. Two-thirds of the text is devoted to neuroradiology: this section is well illustrated and perfectly orthodox and will be familiar to all who have access to such techniques. Echoencephalography and the

use of radioisotopes are described in greater detail with practical guidance. Electrophysiological methods of investigation are not included. There are short essays on the neurological interview and on clinical neuro-ophthalmology which, although excellent in themselves, seem out of place in a book devoted to advanced diagnostic techniques. The idiosyncratic choice of topics and their varying treatment make it less valuable than the title might suggest.

IVAN T. DRAPER

THE EPILEPSIES By John M. Sutherland and Howard Tait. (Pp. 128; 25s.) E. & S. Livingstone: Edinburgh. This is a useful practical guide to the modern approach to epilepsy for the general physician or practitioner and for the senior medical student. It gives the current practice of one firm which has a large experience in this field. Such an approach, based on the diagnosis and management of individual patients with epilepsy, allows the authors to present many different aspects of the subject coherently in a small compass. The book is not an exhaustive treatise but it manages to mention most of what is important for diagnosis and treatment. An emphasis on treating the patient and not simply suppressing his fits is welcome. Ancillary investigations are mentioned fully enough to give the reader an idea of where they should be employed.

There are no references, and in any future editions some mention of texts for wider reading and of a few key papers should be considered.

C. W. M. WHITTY

A NEUROLOGICAL STUDY OF NEWBORN INFANTS Clinica in Developmental Medicine, No. 28 By David J. Beintema. (Pp. xii + 178; illustrated. 37s. 6d.) Spastics International Medical Publications with William Heinemann Medical Books: London. 1968.

In a previous monograph from the same publishers, Heinz Precht and David Beintema described the methods developed in the Department of Developmental Neurology of the University of Groningen for the neurological examination of the full-term newborn infant. In the present work, Dr. Beintema describes important studies on the consistency of the methods and their interpretation. A most valuable contribution is an analysis of the influence of the arousal state of the infant, the ambient temperature, and the time since the last feed. The neurological findings are much more consistent when these variables are standardized by methods described.

Neurological signs change appreciably during the first 10 days of life but have predictive value from about the fourth day on. During the first three days the functional state of the infant's nervous system is best assessed by repeated observation of the infant's respiration, colour, posture, and spontaneous movements. Neurological signs can be interpreted only if the general postnatal condition of the infant is observed. A single random neurological examination may be highly misleading in the neonate.

This is not a book to read rapidly, but it will repay careful study and every neurologist seeing neonatal cases would be well advised to have the tables handy for ready reference.

J. A. SIMPSON