Book reviews

SYSTEM DISORDERS AND ATROPHIES. Parts 1 and 2. Vols. 21 and 22 of HANDBOOK OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY Edited by P. J. Vinken and G. W. Bruyn. (Vol. 21—pp. 636; illustrated; Dfl. 220.00; Vol. 22—pp. 586; illustrated; Dfl. 206.00.) North-Holland: Amsterdam. 1975.

As this monumental enterprise nears completion (and already it is necessary to add editorial notes on publications subsequent to earlier volumes or submission of manuscripts), we come to two volumes which must have caused great difficulties for the editors (assisted by J. M. B. V. de Jong and H. L. Klawans). With some exceptions, earlier volumes have covered aspects of neurology with which most experienced neurologists have some familiarity from personal experience, or from application of well understood diagnostic principles. But how many would be equally confident with the system disorders and atrophies—even an agreed terminology is lacking and this is the realm of eponyms and the bizarre mixtures of nuclear or tract 'degenerations', the neurocutaneous syndromes, the linkages with retinopathy, deafness, renal and skeletal abnormalities with a new combination to perpetuate the names of those who think it worth describing yet another. Let the generalist smirk about stamp collectors. These lovingly described patients are the bricks waiting for an inspired architect—or for the chemist who can tell us what characterises one neurone from another. There are tantalising hints as in Refsum's disease and the α -lipoproteinaemias but is it too much to hope that if a 25-volume *Handbook of Neurology* is ever again attempted there will be at least one volume on biochemical disorders of the CNS?

Most of the disorders described are clearly genetic and so, supposedly, biochemical. But is it really valid to describe various forms of inheritance under a common rubric? Although the reviewer's instinct is to look for general principles and similarities rather than differences (and the editors admit to being reluctant splitters) it is certain that the lumping approach should follow the splitting, not replace it. Re-dealing the pack may give a small slam. The editors were wise, then, to give free scope to their chosen contributors to develop their theories in their own ways, and even to permit more than one chapter on certain important problems such as motor neurone disease. In reviews of earlier volumes we have criticised the amount of repetition: in this pair it is inevitable and even desirable. It is interesting to

note the different uses made of the same literature by authors of different convictions. These volumes are worth having for the references alone. (They are not difficult to find. We have not previously remarked on the commendable idea of indicating the situation of the chapter's references at the foot of each page.)

In an area of neurology in which we are all beginners, these volumes are the collected experience of our colleagues of all countries since the art of systematic recording of clinical and pathological observations began. Regrettably the camera came later: soon we will need the data retrieval computer.

J. A. SIMPSON

SCHIZOPHRENIA: A MULTINATIONAL STUDY (Pp. 150; illustrated; Sw.fr.16) WHO: Geneva. 1975.

This paper-back, condensed from a large and more expensive WHO publication, presents in eminently readable form an account of the initial evaluation phase of the International Pilot Study of Schizophrenia (IPSS). The IPSS involved the psychiatric diagnosis, by relatively objective means, of 1202 psychiatric patients, most of them schizophrenics, in nine different countries. The results show that patients with schizophrenic, manic, and depressive psychoses occur, with generally similar symptomatology, in all nine countries. The IPSS also demonstrates that international epidemiological studies of psychiatric disorders are now possible.

The design and execution of the project are described very clearly. There is also a lucid critical discussion of many of the theoretical issues, including the concept of schizophrenia itself. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in social psychiatry or in epidemiology. It can be recommended most warmly.

J. L. GIBBONS

I MENINGIOMI INTRACRANICI By S. Fasullo and D. Raimondo (Pp. 134; illustrated; price not stated.) Casa Editrice Idelson: Naples. 1974.

This fairly slim volume represents a fairly extensive review of the literature on intracranial meningiomas and is written in Italian. It does not contain a summary either in Italian or in other languages. In the introduction there are some historical considerations with brief mention of reports of a probable meningiomas from 3400 BC to the last century. There is a brief discussion on views about aetiology of meningiomas and on their classification. The histolo-

gical features are discussed together with some of the radiological findings, the clinical correlates, EEG and neuroradiological investigations (but no EMI scan), diagnostic criteria and prognosis. Very little is mentioned about therapeutic approaches or long term sequelae of surgery.

The review of the literature though fairly extensive has a number of obvious omissions but covers 10 fully printed pages. The personal contribution consists of only 16 cases between 29 and 75 years of age, and some of them were operated upon. The illustrations, both of the histological findings and of some of the arteriograms, are satisfactory. The index is limited to a list of the chapters and their subdivisions.

It is difficult to assess for whom this book was written, as the discussion of the literature is primarily aimed at the interested medical student rather than at the specialist. However, on the whole, the information is fairly well digested and does not give the impression of consulting just a telephone directory.

G. PAMPIGLIONE

CEREBRAL ANGIOMAS: ADVANCES IN DIAGNOSIS AND THERAPY By H. W. Pia, J. R. W. Gleave, E. Grote, J. Zierski. (Pp. 285; illustrated; DM58; US \$23.80.) Springer: Berlin. 1975.

The problem posed by intracranial arteriovenous malformations of various kinds is an important one and often presents a difficult therapeutic decision. This monograph consists of the papers given at a symposium held in Giessen in January, 1974. It includes the up-to-date opinions of a representative selection of acknowledged experts.

The treatment of the subject is comprehensive. The chapters on clinical presentation and natural history are complemented by some down-to-earth considerations of treatment in those difficult cases which are not obviously inoperable, but in which surgical treatment carries considerable risks to function. These problems are dealt with in a humane and indeed sensible way. Surgical treatment includes modern techniques of microsurgery, cryosurgery, and the application of stereotaxic techniques. There are full accounts of the latest angiographic methods and of techniques for artificial embolization. An interesting chapter on the long-term features of radiotherapy demonstrates the value it has had in a number of cases but could not, of course, suggest prognostic indicators for this treatment.

The views expressed at this conference should be carefully considered by surgeons and physicians responsible for the care of patients suffering subarachnoid haemorrhage.

JOHN HANKINSON

BLOOD FLOW AND METABOLISM IN THE BRAIN Edited by A. M. Harper, W. B. Jennett, J. D. Miller, and J. O. Rowan. (Pp. 15.10; illustrated; £10.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1975.

It is hard to believe that it was not all that long ago since cerebrovascular disease was a completely neglected field. The 150 papers included in this symposium (these being only half of those submitted) is a measure of the tremendous upsurge of interest and activity that has taken place. The symposium did not follow a particular theme but ranged widely over blood flow and metabolism. However, current excitement over the new understanding of break-through in autoregulation as the mechanism underlying hypertensive encephalopathy is reflected in papers on this subject. Another pre-occupation is with the neural control of cerebral blood vessels. At the 5th International Symposium in Rome in 1971 a prize was offered for the best explanation of the role of neural control; the papers in this, the 7th, symposium indicate that the search for a satisfactory explanation continues.

The editors are to be congratulated on the swift appearance of the volume (publication was less than six months after the symposium), for in a rapidly growing field delay means that the publication is outdated by the time it appears. JOHN MARSHALL

IMPACT AND INJURY By E. S. Gurdjian. (Pp. 370; illustrated; \$33.75.) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1975. This book brings together work done at Wayne State University from 1955 to 1972 on mechanical aspects of head trauma, as a collaborative effort between neurosurgeons and engineers. Most of the observers are experts and an unusual feature is the number which are based on studies on human cadavers, to which forces were applied and results measured. There is a great deal of information about the way in which different tissues react to stress, in particular about how fracture lines travel in the skull according to variables such as the site of the blow. The practical application of all this information is not immediately obvious, except that seat belts and crash helmets are important, and car design could be improved to reduce hazards to occupants. But that is already well known, if too often ignored. The relationship of physical forces to pathological lesions in the brain is not explored in depth. In any event there is increasing evidence that secondary pathophysiological events which occur after the initial impact are very important in determining the outcome after head injury. Moreover, these are much more readily influenced than is the impact injury. One must conclude that while all knowledge is interesting and some of it is useful, some details are more useful than others.

BRYAN JENNETT