Organ Physiology Structure and Function of the Nervous System By Arthur C. Guyton. Second Edition. (Pp. 311; illustrated; £7.50.) W. B. Saunders: London. 1976.

The author makes it clear that this volume is not intended for those looking for a research orientated text. It is designed rather to provide an outline to the general organisation of the nervous system and thus, electively, no textual references are given. Each chapter has an appended bibliography consisting largely of reviews.

Particular attention has been paid to automatic activities such as walking and sleeping, and it is thus surprising to find virtually no mention of the nervous control of breathing.

As the product of a single author, this volume has the merits of a balanced organisation. Nevertheless, it is likely to prove frustrating for any reader expecting to be guided towards basic physiological work, and will appeal most to those looking for an authoritative overview of the workings of the nervous system.

J. NEWSOM DAVIS

Eye Signs and Symptoms in Brain Tumours By Alfred Huber and Frederick C. Blodi. (Pp. 424; illustrated; £30.50.) C. V. Mosby Company: St Louis. 1976.

The third edition of Professor Huber's book, like its predecessors, is intensely personal, clearly reflecting experience acquired over many years. This makes it exciting, and sometimes controversial.

The drawings and the italicised summaries carry particular impact. An excellent chapter on the pupils includes no mention of the recurring problem of the possibly innocent amblyopic eye, with its occasional disconcerting decrease in pupillo-motor power. The section on suprasellar tumours is full of wisdom, but tends to perpetuate the belief that bitemporal hemianopic central scotomata must be interpreted as indicating involvement of the posterior part of the chiasm, an assumption which in practice requires caution.

The significance of paralytic squint in the craniopharyngioma of childhood is noted, but the even greater significance of concomitant squint is omitted. Com-

puterised axial tomography is aptly incorporated in the text. Ultrasonography is somewhat neglected, as is optokinetic nystagmus in the elucidation of brain-stem lesions. It is encouraging to hear of others who believe in chiasmal arachnoiditis, a non-starter with most neurosurgeons. Few would disagree that the unravelling of eye muscle palsies of long standing, and complicated by over and under actions, is difficult, and calls for specialised orthoptic help in neurological centres.

This outstanding book should be at the disposal of every neuro-ophthalmologist.

R. J. S. SMITH

Spina Bifida: Problems and Management By G. D. Stark. (Pp. 192; illustrated; £6.00.) Blackwell Scientific Publications: Oxford, London, Edinburgh, and Melbourne. 1977.

Gordon Stark is one of the few paediatricians who has had an extensive experience and at the same time great interest in the problem of spina bifida, and has been responsible for the care of spina bifida children in Edinburgh for many years. He has somehow managed to condense and clarify his experience in this short monograph, which really covers every conceivable aspect of the abnormality. There is an interesting historical introduction, followed by a discussion of the pathology and embryology, so far as is known. All the practical points in the care of the infant and child with spina bifida are fully dealt with, and there is a clear-cut section on the problems that will arise in the future in relation to these patients.

Perhaps the best part of this volume is the absolutely clear thinking in relation to selection for treatment, a subject which has been hotly discussed and contended in recent years, and Gordon Stark offers sensible, practical, and useful advice. The implications of antenatal diagnosis and amniocentesis are fully dealt with, and the extremely full list of references quoted should be of great help to anybody wishing to write upon this subject in future.

The author and the publishers are to be congratulated on the production of this excellent monograph, which, at

the present time, is good value for money. The book should be compulsory reading for all paediatricians, for all neurologists who treat children, and indeed for anybody, whether surgeon or physician, who has handicapped children to look after.

H. B. ECKSTEIN

Neuropsychological Assessment By Muriel D. Lezak. (Pp. 549; illustrated; £21.90.) Oxford University Press: New York. 1976.

Whereas the majority of textbooks concerned with adult neuropsychology have tended to concentrate on the more theoretical aspects of brain-behaviour relationships, the strength of this volume lies in its comprehensive coverage of the practical aspects of assessing the intellectual/cognitive status of the neurological patient. The bulk of this book (300 pages) is concerned with the detailed descriptions of some 200 psychological tests and techniques, which are grouped according to the function assessed. Where tests have been used in research studies useful tables and summaries of results are given.

The weakness of this volume undoubtedly lies in its treatment of the more theoretical aspects of neuropsychology. In a generally well-structured book, Dr. Lezak appears to have no overall or cohesive conception of the functional organisation of the brain. Initial definitions of terms are often idiosyncratic, and conclusions are quoted from individual papers without regard for differences in terminology. This produces a muddled and sometimes downright misleading mosaic of dogmatism about particular cognitive functions and the deficits acquired as the result of focal or generalised brain lesions. Although these weaknesses limit the value as a textbook, the ready availability within one volume of so many practical details about tests should ensure that *Neuropsychological Assessment* will prove a useful addition to the reference library for psychologists who may wish to consider alternative testing methods, and for their medical colleagues who may be unfamiliar with tests featuring in clinical reports.

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