Book reviews

Chase, Chance, and Creativity By James H. Austin. (Pp. 237+xvii; illustrated; \$16.20.) Columbia University Press: New York. 1978.

This is a very unusual book being part autobiographical, part scientific, part philosophical, and even at times metaphysical. James Austin is a distinguished neurologist whose work on the identification of sulphatides, at first in the neurones and later in the urine of patients with metachromatic leucodystrophy, and also the inherited metabolic deficiency in Krabbe's globoid cell leucodystrophy, is well known. It is the description of how this work came about that is so interesting, particularly to the reviewer who must have been present at the meeting when Denny Brown had an argument with Joe Foley which started the young Austin on a train of thought and study which eventually led him into this complex field of research. I cannot have had the same perception because I do not remember this occasion particularly among many similar interesting exchanges at that time. However, the discussion started off for the author what is the whole theme of the book—serendipity. This word, little used in England before a recent very popular radio programme, can be defined in many ways, but applied to research it consists of taking full advantage of chance happenings to further the progress of knowledge. Pasteur said that fortune favoured the prepared mind, and this remark is often applied to Fleming's discovery of penicillin. Austin also considers that chance is important in research discoveries but only if the mind is well disciplined to appreciate the vital nature of that chance event, and prepared to apply the chance to the creation of a new idea or approach. It is a book very easy to read, even in bed at night, with short chapters which leave you waiting with interest for the next, and there is constant reference to people whom one has known well. That it is of wider interest than just to the doctor is shown by the fact that extracts have appeared in other than the medical press.

The book is recommended to the clinician and research worker, and to the non-medical reader who wonders how the research worker works. It is a sort of halfway house between inspi-

rationally leaping out of the bath shouting Eureka, and the painstaking burning of the midnight oil, but always punctuated by taking advantage of the apple occasionally falling on one's head. It will shatter some illusions, but illuminate many others.

EDWIN R. BICKERSTAFF

The Essentials of Neuroanatomy Third edition By G. A. G. Mitchell, and D. Mayor. (Pp. 140; illustrated; £2.25.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh, London, and New York. 1977.

This short book presents a straightforward account of the anatomy of the central and, to a limited extent, the peripheral nervous system. The first 20 pages deal with the coverings of the brain and the spinal cord, and the reader is led in successive chapters through the medulla oblongata, pons, and mid-brain to the cerebral hemispheres. There are short chapters on the anatomy of the autonomic nervous system, the blood supply of the brain and cord, and a short summary of the development of the nervous system. A page of selected references indicates monographs which will expand the short accounts of individual aspects of central nervous system anatomy.

The book is adequately illustrated with clear line diagrams. The authors have achieved their stated aim of keeping the book as uncluttered as possible, and have not encumbered the reader with fine details of anatomy. This is a book primarily designed for the medical student to whom it can be recommended. I doubt if it is of any specific value to the graduate student or the trainee neurologist.

J. P. BALLANTYNE

Core Text of Neuroanatomy Second Edition By Malcolm B. Carpenter. (Pp. 354; illustrated; \$13.95.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1978.

This book is a major contribution to education in the neurosciences. Its stated aim is to present essential neuroanatomy without unnecessary duplication in a form that is lucid, meaningful, and useful to the student. This

objective has been well and truly achieved. Its success in this regard may well be due to its nature as a condensation of the essentials from the author's larger *Human Neuroanatomy*.

Many of the illustrations will be familiar to all concerned with neurosciences, and are outstanding. They are profuse and supported by a simple and well-written text. The book very reasonably confines itself to the neuraxis and is organised in a regional manner. Cranial nerves are not dealt with in a separate section, but are included in the section dealing with the region in which their nuclei lie. Each section has a comment on the functional and clinical aspects of the material discussed.

The section on the blood supply of the central nervous system is somewhat truncated and there is, surprisingly, no comment here on functional or clinical considerations.

The book is not only ideally suited to the medical undergraduate, but would do excellent service as a reference in clinical neurosciences departments. The edition reviewed is in paperback, and can be considered excellent value at approximately £7.00.

JOHN G. GRAHAM

Desk Reference for Neuroanatomy: A Guide to Essential Terms By Isabel Lockard. (Pp. 157; DM 290, \$133.40.) Springer-Verlag: New York, Heidelberg, Berlin. 1978.

The title of this little compilation is well chosen for it is neither a dictionary nor a comprehensive list. It is offered to students of neuroanatomy as a list, with brief definitions, of terms frequently encountered from such closely related anatomical fields as the gross anatomy of the peripheral nervous system, the histology and embryology of the nervous system, and the anatomy of the eye and ear, with a few terms from neurophysiology, neuropathology, and clinical neurology.

It is difficult to know how it would be used. The reader can only gain access to the lists if he already knows the name of the structure. If he knows that, the definitions are either super-