ease through the neuropathies culminating in matters metaphysical. An intriguing chapter on dementia and religion includes spiritual references from St John Climacus as well as from the Corinthians and St Luke; to a visiting Martian, this might give the misleading impression that dementia is restricted to readers of the New Testament. While a text of this kind can provide no more than a superficial appraisal of a refractory group of maladies, the text is concise and convenient for those who would wish to enjoy a summary of current interests in this area of gerontology and geriatric medicine.

GERALD STERN

Molecular Biology in Basic and Clinical Neuroscience Research. Edited by Jean de Vellis, Jean Lauder, Jacques Mallet, Alain Privat, Jose Regino Perez-Pelo. (Pp 352; £56.00.) New York: Alan R Liss. UK Distrib: John Wiley & Sons, 1986.

The book is divided into four sections which cover neurotransmitters and neuromodulators, aspects of neuronal function and development, glial function and clinical applications. It has been presented by the editors as an introduction to the application of recombinant DNA technology to neurology. There have been several remarkable advances to date which have shown the effectiveness of such an approach, as for example, in Huntington's chorea. These advances have been founded on basic studies such as those exemplified in the book, which is a collection of selected articles, mostly from the USA. These articles by various contributors provide some insight into the way in which fundamental problems are approached by basic scientists. Invariably in such an approach there will be different levels of success and rates of progress reported, leading to variable quality. Generally, no new information is presented that cannot be garnered from the specialist literature. Rather the articles represent research reports, albeit of a specialised nature, in which topics of molecular biological interest are presented somewhat to the exclusion of other more cellular studies. This selectivity may result from efforts to present a concise, molecular biological viewpoint.

Since this book is designed to appeal to clinicians as well as basic scientists, there are several chapters of direct interest to clinicians in the last section. This includes a descriptive analysis of the use of DNA probes and also presents techniques for

obtaining RNA in a viable form from human material. However, the reader would gain more from reading the earlier sections which contain information primarily on structural analysis of genes coding for specific brain elements, as for example in the chapters describing a human myelin basic protein variant and the relationship between tyrosine hydroxylase and homologous sequences. A wide variety of macromolecules are covered ranging from receptors to neuron-specific enzymes. Other chapters include the functional and developmental aspects of these macromolecules as well as the neuronal expression of the proto-oncogenes c-src, which is possibly involved in differentiation processes.

The book is perhaps too specialised and detailed to be viewed as an appropriate introduction for clinicians without prior exposure to molecular biology. It assumes that the reader is at least cognisant of the terminology and concepts. Those in the field will find this book a valuable source of information on developments and clinicians may also appreciate the chapters of more immediate relevance to their specialty. To satisfy basic and clinical researchers is not an easy task and a middle path has to be found which ensures the retention of interest of both parties. This is a useful book to have but one of its drawbacks is that there is considerable redundancy, particularly with regard to strategy. The book should be regarded more as a collection of related articles than as a text in which the contributors present a review of their research interests. It would have been helpful to have included a more extensive overview which also addressed the future direction of the application of molecular techniques.

PAUL SMITH AND CHRISTINE HALL

The XVth Epilepsy International Symposium. (Advances in Epileptology, Vol 10.) Edited by Peter Wolf, Mogens Dam, Dieter Janz, FR Dreifuss. (Pp 650; \$199.50.) New York: Raven Press, 1987.

A selection of 163 papers out of more than 500 that were presented at the 16th International Epilepsy Congress held in 1985 are contained in this book. However, it is more than a simple collection of separate articles, and the editors are to be congratulated on their organisation of the text. The book is divided into 14 sections that deal with different aspects of epilepsy. These include neuropathology, the electrophysiology of seiz-

ures, diagnostic techniques, surgical treatment, anticonvulsant therapy, genetics, psychiatry, self help groups, and neuro-rhymicity.

Much previously unpublished work is included. Several studies are reported on controversial topics such as anticonvulsant drug withdrawal. This allows the reader to readily compare the different approaches to the same problem, and make his own assessment of their merits. However, there is no editorial comment or reference to the discussions held at the meeting.

The book provides an overview of current progress and research techniques in this broad field, but does not aim to give comprehensive reviews. People working in epilepsy, whatever their particular interest, should find it helpful. Access to it would be particularly important for those involved in research.

Essential Neurology: A Concise Textbook. 3rd edition. By William Pryse-Phillips, TJ Murray. (Pp 721; \$37.00) New York: Elsevier Science Publishing Co Inc. 1987.

This text now into its third edition has clearly been popular with medical students for many years. Would I recommend it as essential reading material for the busy undergraduate of today? I am afraid I would not and the reason would be very largely that I consider 700+ pages far too long to be considered as essential reading for a subject to which most medical schools devote only two or three weeks.

The book is divided into four sections, the first two dealing with neurological assessment, examination and localisation and the last two sections devoted to clinical neurology. Section one is devoted to neurological history and examination. It is clearly laid out and supplemented extensively with photographs. The neurological assessment and examination of children and neonates is deliberately brief. This is entirely reasonable as the neurological examination of children, neonates and developmentally delayed is an art of its own and one I suggest most adult neurologists have not acquired. Section two summarises the major symptoms and signs produced by pathology in the nervous system. This is well done and never confuses the reader with too detailed neuroanatomy. The last two sections deal with clinical neurology. The first of these

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symptom orientated and the second is devoted to major disease groupings. This method of approach I found most interesting and the sections entirely complementary without too much repetition. The symptomatic approach will be particularly useful for the new student. As the authors state in the introduction, patients complain of symptoms and not of diseases; this section goes through the major groups of symptoms: dizziness, blackouts, headaches, etc. I liked the way the authors dealt with this section and in particular with their own practical lists of common causes of certain symptoms. These I feel are important in getting any particular complaint into perspective. For example, multiple sclerosis will be the culprit relatively rarely when the complaint is "dizziness".

The last section details major disease categories in a more standard way. Inevitably this leads to some repetition of ground already covered in the previous chapter. This was not excessive and for the new student has some positive reinforcing value.

The bibliography at the end of each chapter was sensibly short but sufficient to direct the interested reader to more detailed tomes.

I enjoyed the book, I liked the style and presentation and would certainly recommend it to an elective student or one who had a particular interest in neurology and those junior medical staff studying for higher degrees. However, I think the length is too great to recommend it to the average student. I well remember how much neurology I knew before finals!

RP MURPHY

The Heart and Stroke: Exploring Mutual Cerebrovascular and Cardiovascular Issues.

(*Clinical Medicine and the Nervous System series.*) Edited by Anthony J Furlan. (Pp 382; £42.00.) London: Springer-Verlag, 1987.

There is a lot of good stuff in this rather random collection of reviews which set out to "explore mutual cerebrovascular and cardiovascular issues". CM Fisher provides us with a wonderful historical account of the evolution of basic ideas in cerebrovascular disease. There follows an article, co-written with RD Adams 35 years ago, which displays his unique talent as an investigative neurologist. The subject is brain embolism and from the correlation of good clinical data with meticulous neuropathological

observation, emerges a pathophysiological scenario which still seems credible today. The next four chapters consider the heart as a source of embolism and three are reasonable if a little repetitive, whilst the fourth (by Lauzier and Barnett) focuses on mitral valve prolapse and mitral annulus calcification and is exemplary. Something like 200 references are cited, each is critically reviewed and the discussion covers all the pertinent controversies. Diagnosis and treatment are eloquently dealt with by Mohr and Hart in two successive chapters which correctly emphasise management uncertainties. Both contributions are well referenced up to early 1986.

Section B, entitled *Cardiovascular Neurobiology*, comprises three chapters which examine: (a) the role of the central nervous system in cardiovascular regulation (Barness & Farrario), (b) the type of cardiac dysfunction which may follow stroke (Norris & Hachinski) and (c) the neuropsychological disturbance which might provoke cardiac rather than brain "attacks" (Levine *et al*). Much of the latter is unashamedly provocative. Again all are copiously referenced. Section C considers post-resuscitation anoxic brain damage, orthostatic hypotension and syncope, within the general heading of global brain ischaemia. The chapter by Abi-Samara *et al* on the diagnostic approach to syncope is particularly good.

Furlan and Jones begin Section D (*Stroke and Open Heart Surgery*) with the CNS complications of open heart surgery, a review which maintains the high standard of other contributions though it is a shame recent results from the Newcastle group are not included. Hertzner and his surgical colleagues then set out the case for pre-treatment of co-existent carotid artery disease but their enthusiasm is tempered by the evidence amassed in the subsequent critical review by Easton and Hart.

The fifth and final Section (*Epidemiology and Risk Factors*) contains two chapters the first of which is from the Framingham Study Group. It evaluates the status of risk factors for ischaemic stroke circa 1986. Elevated serum fibrinogen has now joined the long list of "independent" risk factors identified by multivariate analysis. Almost every manifestation of ischaemic heart disease identifies individuals at risk from stroke but it is by no means clear whether the link is causal or merely guilt by association. The gratifying reduction in stroke incidence is attributed to risk factor manipulation (particularly the identification and treatment of hypertension); once you have had a stroke, the chances of functional recovery have not

really improved.

The book ends with a chapter which has staggering resource implications. Every study on the natural history of patients with cerebrovascular disease has identified cardiac disease as a major cause of death. This is true for patients with asymptomatic carotid disease, TIA, stroke, vertebro basilar atherosclerosis, internal carotid artery occlusion, etc. Ergo, argue Hobbs and Furlan, all patients should be screened for coronary artery disease and exercise ECG stress testing represents a minimal requirement. If the test is abnormal, then some form of coronary angiography should be undertaken even in asymptomatic patients. The purpose, of course, is to identify patients whose angiogram needs surgical attention but it hardly seems reasonable to predict their prognosis on data culled from symptomatic patients with comparable angiographic lesions. And if you do a CABG, shouldn't you also advise "protective" carotid endarterectomy (see chapter 16)? District managers better watch this space!

Two problems facing the editor of a book by multiple authors are repetition and lack of consensus and both are apparent here. But Dr Furlan made some excellent choices when he selected his authors and he seems to have got the best out of them. He has edited an important and provocative book which should interest everyone concerned in managing neurovascular patients.

J WADE

Neuromuscular Problems in Orthopaedics. Edited by CSB Galasko. (Pp 279; £49.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1987.

There is much orthopaedics in neurology and much neurology in orthopaedics, and any textbook which tries to bridge the two disciplines is welcome. This book is aimed primarily at orthopaedic surgeons, but certainly there is a wealth of important information for neurologists, few of whom have much training in orthopaedic aspects of neurological problems. Medical and surgical aspects of various topics are considered, including cerebral palsy, congenital spinal cord lesions such as the dysraphic states,