organism has been isolated and named *Tropheryma whippelii*. Some of the greatest diagnostic challenges are encountered in patients with malignant disease who have had immunosuppression and radiotherapy and then develop a deteriorating clinical situation. The clinician has to decide whether they have further disease, side effects of treatment, or intercurrent infections. This section deals with these rare infectious agents and the breadth is staggering.

The second part opens with the most comprehensive overview of virology, with in many instances more pathological illustrations than neuro-ophthalmological illustrations. There is an extensive section on multiple sclerosis and the accumulation of 20 pages of double columns of references fairly reflects the depth of coverage and there are extensive reviews of the Guillain Barré syndrome. In addition there is a comprehensive and well referenced section on sarcoidosis with good fundus photos, MRI scans, and pathology. Finally, it seems appropriate that after studying the scientific and clinical material of neuro-ophthalmology for five volumes, the last breath should be reserved for the practicing clinician. The final chapter is on the "neuro-ophthalmic manifestation of non-organic disease".

This book will be of immense value and service to all in neuro-ophthalmology. It contains an encyclopaedic volume of material with cohesion and a massive bibliography. This may sometimes be at the price of clinical fine tuning but my final advice is to rejoice that this has been completed; rejoice that the author has maintained his dedication and sanity, and procuring your individual copy will give you no regrets and probably a great deal of pleasure.

MIKE SANDERS

The Treatment of Epilepsy. Edited by S SHORVON, F DREIFUSS, D FISH and D THOMAS. (Pp 835; £99.50.) Published by Blackwell Science, Oxford. 1996. ISBN 0-6320-3782-2.

The first chapters of this major new book set treatment in the context of modern accounts of the pathophysiology, classification and diagnosis of epilepsy. In doing so the book could almost claim to be a comprehensive textbook of epilepsy, which to my mind such a large tome really ought to be. At present it does lack an account of epidemiology, a gap which will shortly be filled by a review in the *JNNP* Neuroepidemiology series. The historical introduction describes the contribution of the National Hospital, Queen Square, and especially its Victorian neurological giants, Gowers and Hughlings Jackson, to the treatment of epilepsy. However the rest of the book is distinctly international with authors drawn from all over the world.

The chapter on pathophysiology is hard going for those who had forgotten the more intricate details of the T-type calcium channels and different types of GABA receptor, partly because the figures and their abbreviations have not been adequately annotated. Fortunately all is eventually revealed in a later chapter on the mechanisms of action of antiepileptic drugs. The strength of the book is its coverage of the advantages of each of the antiepileptic drugs. Another strength is the detailed description of the investigation for and remarkable success of surgical treatment in selected cases. Each of the chapters

on drug treatment includes a box summarising the editors' personal view of each drug. The other chapters would also have been enhanced, like the Scott report, by executive summaries. Every textbook is bedevilled by the march of time and perhaps the trials supporting the superiority of magnesium sulphate in eclampsia, for instance, were not published by the time this book went to press. In some of the chapters information is given in a didactic fashion without the detailed referencing which is needed in a book of this weight. With clarification of the obscurer passages and inclusion of one or two more chapters this important new book should mature into the international standard comprehensive textbook of epilepsy. It is already a valuable resource for all who treat epilepsy.

RICHARD HUGHES

Tropical Neurology. Edited by RAAD A SHAKIR, PETER K NEWMAN, CHARLES M POSER. (Pp 485; £50.00.) 1996. London: WB Saunders and Co. ISBN 0-7020-1922-4.

The editors describe this volume as a "genuinely international and comprehensive book" which aims to "distil current knowledge in a form which will be valuable to the neurologist practising in tropical zones and in temperate regions where imported cases are seen". Unfortunately, because the contents are arranged entirely by disease and grouped by their causes, a neurologist is bound to find it of limited value unless he knows the cause of the complaint from the outset. The way round the problem is simple and has been negotiated successfully by contributors to the standard large textbooks on tropical diseases. An author with great experience of neurology in the tropics—Billinghurst and Osuntokun have done the job well in two recent volumes—could have provided an overview which draws attention to common symptom complexes such as acute brain syndromes (often caused by more or less extracerebral infections such as typhoid fever which merits only a passing mention in the volume under discussion), cord lesions, or polyneuropathies etc and summarises likely causes in different regions of the world.

Such an introduction would make the whole text vastly more useful to the clinician puzzled by the unfamiliar and would have added little to the total bulk of this volume. It would have disarmed critics like myself who are obliged to ask how the text can be called comprehensive when it mentions only in passing, or not at all, typhoid and typhus (both so-called because of the clouding of consciousness they can produce), leptospirosis and Lyme borelliosis. These are important because they are treatable. Vascular diseases of the brain and cord should have been mentioned because they are very common in the tropics, often complicating hypertension, diabetes, or haemoglobinopathies.

The editors claim to have considered the plight of the practitioner with limited resources. Unfortunately many of their authors, 19 of whom work in the Western World compared with only one who practises in tropical Africa, give the impression that they would feel extremely insecure without access to MRI scanners and to facilities for culturing bacteria, let alone to patient's relatives with the wherewithal to

buy drugs which are often unimaginably expensive to those on third world incomes.

Having criticised the lack of any attempt to synthesise the contributions, and the too-often Western oriented approach, credit must be given to many of the chapters which are excellent. Warrell on cerebral malaria, Bill on schistosomiasis, Dumas on African trypanosomiasis, Wadia on neurocysticercosis, Vernant on HTLV-1, and the Warrells on rabies are all authoritative and valuable. Senanayaka's review of toxins is pertinent and comprehensive. The chapter on leprosy is marred by the statement that recommendations on treatment are undergoing constant review and the interested clinician is advised to phone a Louisiana number to find out how to treat a case. Actually, the WHO recommendations on multidrug therapy have been virtually unaltered for 14 years and differ substantially from those in the text. Of pure neural leprosy (with no skin lesions) there is no mention, despite its obvious importance to neurologists.

In 1973, JD Spillane edited a volume also entitled *Tropical neurology* which was largely a compendium of disease as it presented to neurologists practising in various tropical locales. It was strong on the syndromal approach and is still of considerable value. To be sure, much has been learnt since then, but this book, which sees itself as a successor to Spillane, would have been greatly enhanced by his insights. In his preface, Spillane stated that it will be many years before a comprehensive account of tropical neurology could be undertaken. I believe that it could be now but, sadly, this is not it.

CHRISTOPHER ELLIS

Hypnotics and Anxiolytics. (Bailliere's Clinical Psychiatry). Guest Editors D J NUTT, W B MENDELSON. (Pp 509; £30.00). 1995. London: WB Saunders Company. ISBN 0-7020-1955-0.

Anxiety and insomnia are very much Cinderella subjects, even within psychiatry. Epidemiological surveys have established quite high prevalence rates for anxiety disorders but only a relatively small proportion of such patients are treated by specialised services. Where they are, their treatment is often assumed by practitioners who might have considerable experience in conducting of anxiety management groups but are unlikely to have much experience of formal training in pharmacological aspects of treatment. Insomnia is probably one of the most common symptoms alleged in primary care and among hospital patients decisions about its treatment are frequently devolved to on-call junior medical staff called upon to write up night sedation. Thus a compilation of expert opinion upon the roles and limitations of pharmacological approaches to treatments of anxiety and insomnia is timely.

The book begins with an attempt to correct the Cinderella status of these problems in the form of chapters outlining the economic costs of anxiety and insomnia. The author of the latter of these estimates that in 1996 the total direct cost of insomnia to the United States economy was \$10.9 billion. The role of benzodiazepines in the treatment of insomnia and anxiety are outlined by acknowledged experts in these areas, and there is a useful chapter documenting and describing the phenomenology of benzodiazepine dependence and discontinuation. The use of monoamine oxidase inhibitors,