Book reviews

changes in parasellar lesions are hardly touched on though they form the keystone of diagnosis in this area; much of the recent work on cervical spondylisis has been omitted, including anterior operations of the Cloward type.

The newer concepts of brain damage in injuries hardly get a hearing though many date back to the 1939-45 war; the newer ideas on nerve conduction in testing injuries are not described; and the arguments for and against hypothermia are not clearly stated nor are the methods available described.

The subject matter is not well arranged; who would expect to find a description of the anatomy of the skull, meninges, and vessels in the middle of the book under cranio-cerebral injuries? Looking for specific facts the index is often unhelpful and could be elaborated.

This book will certainly find a place on the shelves of most young neurosurgeons for it contains much that is good and is the only textbook of neurosurgery of manageable size available. Its aims are, however, too diffuse and a change of emphasis to the surgical or neurological aspects of these diseases might be of value in subsequent editions.

BRODIE HUGHES


This comprehensive monograph is based on 70 cases of primary tumours of the vertebral column which have been investigated by the neurosurgical service at Marseilles. The clinical, radiological, and pathological features are very well presented, and a concluding chapter concerns principles of treatment. There is a bibliography of over 500 references. This book may be recommended to neurosurgeons, radiologists, and neurologists as a detailed review of the subject and as a mine of valuable personal observation.


This monograph presents a study of 170 neurosurgical patients with respiratory disorders of central origin, mostly of acute onset. The abnormalities of respiratory movement are classified and shown to be determined by the localization rather than pathogenesis of the lesion. Respiratory efficiency, as measured by the levels of the blood gases, and the sensitivity of the medullary respiratory centre, as judged by the response to an increasing partial pressure of carbon dioxide, are related to the varieties of disordered respiration. Two clinical situations are distinguished; heightened sensitivity of the respiratory center, which occurs with restlessness, rigidity and extensor spasm, and diminished sensitivity, in a setting of hypotonia and relative indifference to pain. Finally, the relevance of these findings to the use of sedatives and of stimulants in therapy is discussed.

The work is clearly and concisely presented, and complemented by an adequate index and an unusually extensive bibliography.

M. KINSBOURNE


The authors of this short book give a useful summary of the evidence relating handedness to cerebral dominance. They also report a careful comparative study of the effects of unilateral hemisphere lesions in right- and left-handed patients respectively, having regard to the incidence of agnosia, apraxia, and disorders of the body scheme as well as disorders of language. Their analysis indicates that disorders in all these spheres tend to be more common, though as a rule milder and less long-lasting, in sinistrals than in dextrals, irrespective of the laterality of the lesion. Differences also appear to exist in the pattern of disability associated with unilateral lesions; receptive speech defects, for example, seldom present in severe degree in dysphasic sinistrals whereas disorders of the body scheme are if anything more complicated than in dextrals.

Although such differences have been reported before, this is perhaps the first study of its kind in which statistical tests of significance have been applied where appropriate.

In the light of their findings, the authors postulate that the mode of organization of higher cerebral function in sinistrals differs appreciably from that in dextrals, and may perhaps be said to display less well-marked unilateral specialization. Although not all neurologists will agree with this view, the evidence on which it is based deserves close study by everyone interested in the problem of cerebral dominance.


This book describes the mechanism by which various nerves are injured by muscular action and fibrous bands. Many neurologists will be more familiar with the terms 'occupational' or 'compression' neuropathy. It is a good idea to bring these cases together as has been done here and the anatomical relationships are well presented. However, it is surprising to find that emphasis is so much on the pain caused by these neuropathies and so little on the distribution of the muscular paralysis on which accurate diagnosis depends so much; indeed these cases are often quite painless. Thus there seems to be no clear account of the syndromes resulting from a neuropathy causing a block of the posterior interosseous or of the anterior interosseous nerves in the forearm. However, this is a useful publication which draws attention to a rather neglected subject.

W. RITCHIE RUSSELL


This is a useful little book which not only brings together the scattered literature of this subject but which also contains the author's personal observations on 200 diabetic patients. The clinical findings in those with neuropathy are well described, and there is also a detailed account of electro-physiological studies carried out in