

## Book reviews

FURTHER CRITICAL STUDIES IN NEUROLOGY AND OTHER ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES By F. Walshe. (Pp. viii + 248; illustrated. 30s.) Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. 1965.

In this successor to *Critical Studies in Neurology*, published in 1948, Sir Francis covers a wider range of subjects and there are 'modest excursions into the philosophy of medicine'. In the past half century his scientific papers, essays, addresses, lectures, letters, and comments on diverse themes have revealed him as a brilliant scientific thinker, a master of the English language, and a critic of unremitting and devastating genius. It is altogether exceptional that the same man should also be a clinician and author of a textbook which has been described as 'one of the classics of medicine'. That book, *Diseases of the Nervous System*, notable for its clinical narrative and prudent advice, shows its author to be a gentle humanist, compassionately aware of the manifold difficulties of practising the art of medicine. Reservations notwithstanding, his main influence has been on the mind or soul of the medical profession and not on its body politic.

The interpretation of experimental studies of cortical motor function, the Babinski plantar response, and the origin of the pyramidal tract are lucid analytical papers well known to neurologists and neurophysiologists. That on the centrencephalic integrating system of Penfield must be one of the most withering assaults on scientific doctrine that has been made in the twentieth century. The two most recent essays, on cortical localization and neurobiology and 'neuropsychology', published only last year, are bursting with ripe wisdom and constructive thought, telling phrases and analogies. Thinking is made to appear so enjoyable—whereas we all know how irksome it can be. Twenty years ago what might be called Walshe's First Law was promulgated, namely that, '*As new facts increase in number and diversity, the need for their interpretation and synthesis increases in corresponding degree.*' Today his Second Law might be stated thus: '*In experimental studies of nervous function it is essential to adopt consistent principles of interpretation.*'

That the scientific materialist has no acceptable philosophy to offer Sir Francis is evident, as might be anticipated, in his eloquent essay on mind-brain relationship. His standpoint is that of Sir Thomas Browne who affirmed, three centuries ago, that 'Man is a Noble Animal'.

For the clinician, the value of this book is in the explanation and reminder that 'clinical observation stands upon its own foundation' and is not in any way dependent upon 'confirmation' by animal experiments. For the physiologist, there is the critical assessment of the 'operational view' of experimental procedures: for us all, the enchantment provided by a fine exponent of English prose.

J. D. SPILLANE

THE EFFECT OF USE AND DISUSE ON NEUROMUSCULAR FUNCTIONS Edited by E. Gutmann and P. Hnik. (Pp. 576. 100s.) Amsterdam: Elsevier. 1963.

This is the proceedings of a symposium held at Liblice near Prague during September, 1962, under the sponsorship of the International Union of Physiological Sciences. Perhaps it is due to this sponsorship that contributions from clinical scientists are extremely sparse. Nevertheless, this book, which is an extension of 'The Denervated Muscle', edited by Gutmann, is of profound importance and interest to all clinicians who deal with disordered neuromuscular function. Over sixty members present short, excellent accounts of their work, dealing with the trophic interactions between nerve and muscle cells, the effects of use and disuse on nerve and muscle cells, and the specific adaptation of metabolism accompanying this. Each paper is followed by a verbatim report of the discussion, which was very lively and rather lengthy.

The general production of the book is good. Line drawings are well reproduced but, unfortunately, not photomicrographs.

This book is warmly recommended as a landmark in the assessment of knowledge on the relationship between muscles and the nerve cells that supply them. It does not deal specifically with disorders of the neuromuscular junction.

GEOFFREY RUSHWORTH

ACTUALITÉS NEUROPHYSIOLOGIQUES. Cinquième Série. Edited by P. Laget and A. Monnier. (Pp. 301; 176 figures. F.75.) Paris: Masson et Cie. 1964.

This is the fifth volume of essays on various aspects of neurophysiology, and, in common with the previous volumes, it presents beautifully written, up-to-date reviews of selected topics of current interest. The series as a whole aims to cover aspects of the biophysics and biochemistry of nerve fibres, the physiology of muscle, the physiology of the central nervous system, the physiology of sense organs, and applied neurophysiology.

In spite of the modern trend in neurophysiology to over-stress the relative importance of cellular biophysics and its comparative aspects, the present volume deals, in addition, with various integrative actions of the nervous system, some of which are of considerable interest to the experimentally minded clinician and even the electroencephalographer.

Professor Monnier is to be congratulated in producing such an interesting five-volume series of neurophysiological topics, and Dr. Laget and Mme. Monnier for their clear and concise presentation.

GEOFFREY RUSHWORTH

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, 2nd edn. By E. Geoffrey Walsh. (Pp. xv + 615; illustrated. 50s.) London: Longmans Green. 1964.

It is a pleasure to welcome the second edition of