Book reviews

CEREBROSPINAL FLUID AND THE REGULATION OF VENTILATION
Edited by C. McBrooks, F. F. Kao, and B. B. Lloyd.
(Proceedings of Symposium at Downstate Medical Centre, State University of New York) (Pp. 438; 84s.)
This book is a report of the proceedings of a symposium, including the discussions verbatim. The reader can almost feel he was there, for a clearly named photograph of the participants at dinner forms the frontispiece, and as befits this approach the style is conversational. The book springs from the current revolution in respiratory physiology, that changes in the chemistry especially in $PCO_2$ and pH of the C.S.F. are at least as important as those in the blood for the control of respiration. The C.S.F. changes and the concomitant changes in respiration are described in metabolic acidosis and alkalosis and in exercise, and supplementary papers deal with formation, circulation and drainage of the C.S.F. The field covered by this book is rapidly developing and is relevant to other clinical problems as it may offer an explanation for the occurrence in patients with neurological disease of over-breathing, periodic breathing, and other respiratory disturbances.

In the sixteen years since serotonin (5-HT) was discovered and synthesized there has been an unparalleled attack on its biological status. Many who followed the story in the early days rapidly lost the place in the wester of conflicting data which had been reported. This is a convenient time to take stock and all interested in the physiological role of this versatile substance will welcome the excellent review by two pharmacologists of the Italian school which has been in the forefront of the research.
Neurologists and psychiatrists will be particularly interested in the valuable summary of the biochemistry and pharmacology of serotonin in the brain. Regional variations in concentration, and differential response to releasing and inhibiting drugs are discussed with reference to the action of psychotropic drugs and the possible role of serotonin in mental disease, epilepsy, and disorders of the basal ganglia but the authors wisely refrain from drawing conclusions. The systematic account of species differences underlines the necessity for caution in extrapolating laboratory findings to human disease. No conclusion is reached on the possibility of 'serotonergic transmission'.
In excellent English the authors have correlated 3,600 references up to 1964 and constructed useful tables of the concentrations of 5-HT in various animal and vegetable tissues which will be most useful to other workers. The book is well produced with a good index.

J. A. SIMPSON

In the seven years since its last edition there has been a marked acceleration in the growth of biochemical knowledge of the central nervous system. It is hardly surprising then that this book has been extensively revised, two thirds rewritten, and is now nearly half as large again. A concise but readable style has enabled Professor McIlwain to cover admirably the entire wide field he set in the previous editions, though the specialist may feel that his own field has not been covered in any depth. None the less it is a book that should be found useful, not only by students, but by anyone intimately concerned with the central nervous system, having interests wider than his own speciality. Those anxious to pursue a subject further will find the references are well chosen and reasonably up-to-date; many are to recent symposia—an excellent practice, were it not that so few libraries in this country are likely to have the particular one required. The book is well produced with a good index and it came as a surprise to find at least three spelling mistakes in the index, though only one was noticed in the text.
Diseases are mentioned in their appropriate biochemical context. This is a good arrangement for most diseases and, in general, they receive adequate attention (though there is no mention of kernicterus). It has the disadvantage, however, that the recent work on schizophrenia tends to be scattered throughout the book without any critical survey of what has been accomplished.

TECHNICAL PROGRESS IN NEUROLOGICAL DIAGNOSTICS
The title of this book is misleading. It is not an account of technical methods though some papers include sufficient practical and theoretical information to be useful introductions to new techniques. It is, in fact, the proceedings of the 17th Congress of Scandinavian Neurologists in Göteborg, Sweden, in August, 1964.
The papers are grouped under the following headings: echo-encephalography, isotope encephalography, C.S.F. pressure recording, C.S.F. protein analysis, C.S.F. chemistry and cytology, electroencephalography, electro-myography, nerve conduction investigation, biopsy examination, cerebral circulation investigation, and various diagnostic investigations, including amino-acid metabolism, hyperuricaemia in cerebral infarction, nystagmography in myasthenia gravis, and depth electroencephalography.
Some papers are by experts and original workers in these fields while others are trivial contributions. The book is not suitable as a working manual but many clinicians will find it interesting as a guide to the scope of