quoted is from a review in 1958 of others' results, including the first steps in thymectomy of a number of surgeons.) Unfortunately, for the reader looking for guidance in handling the occasional case, the book gives little practical information on the Tensilon test or on the regulation of drug dosage, and it perpetuates the plea for longer acting anticholinesterases, which is misguided until the pharmacologist can guarantee to eliminate cumulative effects. Dosage is not easy, even for those familiar with the use of anticholinesterase drugs and the variability of myasthenic syndromes. I would agree with the author that self-regulated medication is usually arbitrary and a common cause of cholinergic crises.

The production is good and the bibliography excellent.

J. A. SIMPSON

NEUROSURGERY OF INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD 2nd edition.

By Ronald D. Matson. (Pp. xi + 934; 651 figs; \$38.50) Thomas: Springfield, Illinois. 1969.

It is 15 years since 'Ingraham and Matson' was welcomed as the first comprehensive publication in the field of paediatric neurosurgery. Dr. Ingraham died in 1965 and this second edition has been radically rewritten by Dr. Matson; alas, a few months before publication, Dr. Matson died at the height of his powers. This book, therefore, stands as a testimony to his life's work, which makes the reviewer's task difficult—is he writing a review or an obituary? With such an important volume, already established as a major reference work in the field, and further editions certain to be demanded, some comments for the ears of future editors may be judged in order without detracting from the magnificent achievement of the author.

The book as it stands is a personal one, reporting the experience and methods of the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston. Indeed, in his preface Dr. Matson offers it as a monograph, and insists that it is not an encyclopaedic reference text. Yet that is what most readers will expect of a book of this price, running to 1,000 pages and 700 references. In fact, no important aspect of paediatric neurosurgery is omitted, this second edition having added chapters on the surgery of epilepsy and pain, on benign intracranial hypertension and on Sturge Weber disease. The reports of Dr. Matson's uniquely large series of various conditions, particularly of intracranial tumours, are fascinating and invaluable. He explicitly states in the preface that he has deliberately decided not to engage in critical comparison with the experience or methods of other clinics, which the reader is encouraged to do for himself from the original sources. But the material here is seldom presented with as full an analysis as in a scientific paper, and this makes it less easy than it sounds to carry out such comparisons. As a result the book leaves many intriguing questions unanswered, particularly the reasons which led Dr. Matson to reject the several alternative approaches that are available for many of the problems discussed.

It might be thought that to expand the book to include such critical comparisons would make an already overweight book unmanageable. However, there is little doubt that much could be done to condense the informa-

tion in the present edition by effecting economies of style and illustration. There are over 600 illustrations, but the time has come in this as in many other books to question the real value to the reader of black and white reproductions of operative fields or of histological sections, or of pictures of excised tumours lying by the inevitable statutory scale. The many photographs of happy young adults with a legend indicating how ill the individuals were as children, were appropriate in the days when neurosurgery still had to justify itself, but seem a little outdated in the '70s. These are, of course, minor criticisms. This is an invaluable tome, of interest not only to surgeons but to all doctors who are concerned to know how one world famous clinic deals with the wide variety of problems now coming within the scope of paediatric neurosurgery.

CYTOLOGY OF TUMOURS AFFECTING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

By John A. Jane and David Yashon. (Pp. xi + 217; 98 figures; \$13.50). Thomas: Springfield. 1969.

This book is, to the best of my knowledge, the first to be devoted entirely to the use of smears in the diagnosis of cerebral tumours. Before the various types of tumour are illustrated, there is a short chapter on the appearances of normal, gliotic, and non-neoplastic brain tissue.

The book is essentially an atlas, as the text amounts to little more than legends for the illustrations. The latter, in general, are of fairly good quality. One might question some of the diagnoses, but the book should be welcomed as a bold attempt on the part of two neurosurgeons to provide an atlas that will be of considerable interest to clinicians and trainee neuropathologists.

My major criticism is that the subject is dealt with too superficially. The difficulties often encountered in attaching a precise diagnosis to a particular tumour are insufficiently stressed, with the result that many might be led to assume that the technique is simple and fool-proof.

The inclusion of smears that presented difficulties in diagnosis, supported by information about the ultimate diagnosis in sections would have greatly enhanced the value of the book. As all the illustrations occupy a full page, twice the number of illustrations could have been incorporated without increasing the size of the book.

Finally, it is unfortunate that there is no mention of the value of smears in establishing the presence of some other types of brain pathology such as encephalitis. Nevertheless, until a better text is forthcoming, this book should be used frequently in laboratories and clinical units using the smear technique in the diagnosis of brain tumours.

J. HUME ADAMS

DIE BANGSCHE KRANKHEIT UND DAS PERIPHERE NERVENSYSTEM

By Radko Pavlák. (Pp. 134; 12 figures. DM 54). Springer: Berlin. 1969.

It may be that this useful monograph will be the last one concerning us in Britain, as the Animal Health Division of the Ministry of Agriculture has already started on its plan to eradicate brucellosis entirely.

Malta fever, which we call brucellosis after Bruce who discovered the gram-negative organism in 1886, is called Bang's disease in German-speaking countries, following the identification of the organism causing contagious abortion in cows and pigs by Bang and Traum four years later.

This monograph, with its many tables of figures, 207 references, and excellent review of the literature, is recommended to all interested in this disorder, as well as to all medical libraries. It reports the author's 104 cases of brucellosis together with 44 controls; the controls did the same jobs—veterinary surgeons and dairy workers—as the patients, but they were free from the infection.

In this granulomatous infection, the neurological picture occurs mainly in the chronic stage. Between 60% and 85% of patients have symptoms referable to the peripheral nerves, although neurological signs are often minimal. In the author's series, the peripheral nervous system was involved twice as often as the central nervous system. Pain is always an important characteristic of the disease, 73% of this series coming to the doctor on account of pain. It can be burning or shooting; it is in the distribution of the peripheral nerves, in the muscles and in joints. Orthopaedic manifestations of the disease are also common; 35% of the patients presenting with the picture of prolapsed discs. The patient, if untreated, usually recovers spontaneously.

P. W. NATHAN

DISORDERS OF THE SKULL BASE REGION Nobel Symposium 10. Edited by Carl-Axel Hamberger and Jan Wersall. (Pp. 364; illustrated; 280s.). John Wiley: New York. 1969.

This book of 364 pages is based on the proceedings of the Tenth Nobel Symposium held in Stockholm, August, 1968. It was organized by Swedish otolaryngologists and the proceedings were edited by the Professor and Associate Professor of Otolaryngology of the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm. There were 79 participants, 44 of whom were Swedish; the book was printed in Sweden and published in the United States of America.

The nature of a book with such a title is not self-evident and in view of the extraordinary price the reviewer believes prospective buyers would like to be fully informed of the contents, which are as follows.

Seventeen pages of preliminaries (preface; contents; organizers; participants, and a half page devoted to welcoming and opening address); acoustic neuroma, 130 pages; pituitary gland, 110 pages; glomus jugulare tumours, 40 pages; miscellaneous skull base tumours, 43 pages; and trauma of the skull base, 20 pages.

In each topic there are communications, many of them very brief, on aspects of anatomy, pathology, clinical and radiological investigation, and on surgical techniques. The audiological diagnosis of acoustic neuroma takes only three pages; the diagnosis of vestibular system disorders two and a half pages; cerebrospinal fluid diagnosis in acoustic neuroma (50 cases) is the only contribution by a neurologist (two pages, one of which is filled by two tables); the anatomy of the pituitary gland takes four and a half pages, which includes three

large illustrations, two of them on the histology of the gland in the guinea-pig; pituitary tumour pathology, five pages (two pages of which are made up of four electron microscope photographs); changes in the sella turcica in pituitary tumours, three and a half pages. And so on.

I have no doubt that the participants enjoyed this symposium, that friendships were established and renewed, and that information was exchanged. But much of the printed discussion is quite banal and lacking editorship. A few examples. 'Did your slides represent material from human beings or animals?' (p. 42). The reply leaves the reader still guessing. And, 'My sincere compliments for a very complete anatomical study presented in a most illustrative manner' (p. 144). And what does this mean? On parapharyngeal tumours (p. 335) 'if you are taking the biopsy specimen through the mouth, you will get scar tissue, which makes extirpation of the tumour much more difficult. Therefore, I advise you to make a puncture biopsy only through the mouth or from the outside'.

The book is undoubtedly based on considerable practical achievements by surgeons and radiologists in this region of the human body, and most neurologists will find something of interest in it. A rhinologist contemplating hypophysectomy or an otologist anxious to try his hand at the translabyrinthine approach for acoustic neuroma may think it valuable. \$33.50 to Texan or Californian Otolologic Medical Group may be chicken feed, but if, as the secretary of the Nobel Committee of Medicine said in the closing address, 'the main intention of the Nobel donation has been to promote better international understanding and goodwill', then the inflated price of this book only defeats this laudable object.

In the 1970s somebody will surely arrange a symposium to consider how symposia were best organized for the benefit of all.

J. D. SPILLANE

THE PRINCIPLE OF PARSIMONY IN MEDICINE and Other Essays By I. M. Tarlov. (Pp. xi + 65; \$4.75).

Thomas: Springfield, Illinois. 1970.

This short volume of essays by a well-known American neurosurgeon is centred round a particular interpretation of Occam's razor. It has all been said before and the style is not outstanding, but it will pass an idle hour. (Neurosurgeons will hope for a better future than Dr. Tarlov predicts.)

J. A. SIMPSON

BRAIN'S DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM 7th edition.

Revised by the late Lord Brain and John N. Walton. (Pp. xv + 1062; 129 figures, 95s.). Oxford University Press: London. 1969.

It is a little unfair to criticize a book prepared in the present circumstances. The late Lord Brain must have been aware that his well-known textbook was becoming too esoteric for the general reader or the candidate for Membership and DPM examinations when he wrote *Clinical Neurology* for them. On the other hand, 'let's look up Russell Brain' had become heard less often in