THE THERAPY OF THE WORD IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

This volume is a translation of a monograph by the professor of the history of medicine at the University of Madrid which appeared in Spanish 12 years ago. Drawing on original sources, the author contends that, while the therapeutic power of verbal communication was clearly recognized in Greek mythology and Greek philosophy, it was largely rejected by Greek medicine. A book, therefore, for modern proponents and opponents of the Vergilian view of medicine as muta ars.

CLINICAL NEURO-OPTHALMOLOGY (3 vols.) 3rd edition.

The third edition of this famous textbook has now expanded to three large and expensive volumes. It is now more than ever a work for library reference, but in its sphere there is nothing to touch it. Dr. Walsh states in a foreword that he was not satisfied with the second edition, but he need have no doubts about this one in which he is joined by his former junior colleague Dr. W. F. Hoyt, of San Francisco.

There have been many revisions and additions to the introductory chapters on anatomy and function. All sections show evidence of careful review and those on neuromuscular disorders, cerebrovascular disease, and tumours of the eye, orbit, and nervous system have been extensively rewritten. The book could be smaller if it concentrated on the ophthalmological aspects of neurological disease and omitted much irrelevant material from the many case histories, but it would lose its character. In its present form it doubles as a textbook of neurology for ophthalmologists. Unfortunately, the selection of references is sometimes uncritical.

Proof correction is not immaculate—certainly a difficult task with a book of this size—and the reproduction of half-tone blocks should be better. But these are minor criticisms of a major work which is certain to continue as the foremost authority on its subject.

J. A. SIMPSON

NORMAL TREMOR

Controversy in science exists mainly at two levels. The first occurs when the results of experiments are disputed; the second concerns the much more thorny field of interpretation of these results. When results themselves are questioned, it almost always turns out that the differences between groups of workers are due to the experimental approaches to a problem being sufficiently far apart to account for the discrepancies.

In research on tremor, far-reaching and apparently irreconcilable views are maintained by various research groups, stemming from both the sources of misunderstanding mentioned. On the one hand, it is supposed that normal tremor is due to cardiac action; on the other, the properties of the feed-back servo-loop supplying muscles are believed by some to lead to self-oscillation at a predominant frequency of 10 Hz.

Professors Brumlik and Yap have performed a great service to workers on normal tremor in writing this book because they set out to make a hard and fast definition of tremor. With this behind them, it will be possible for the various factions to compare their results on a much more realistic basis than hitherto. There can be no doubt that the origin of normal tremor lies in the operation of multiple factors, and it should now be possible to elucidate the degree to which each factor contributes to the overall picture. For example, if cardiac action is the source of resting tremor, it should be easy to alter heart-rate by exercise, say, and then to observe any differences that may result in tremor frequency. Alternatively, a rigid clamp to hold the arm at the elbow, combined with inflation of an arterial cuff, ought to abolish those components of finger tremor due to the pulse.

The book can be recommended as a successful and scholarly attempt to resolve some of the doubts and difficulties which do exist in a particularly controversial aspect of neurophysiological endeavour.

O. C. J. LIPPOLD

NEUROLOGICAL AND NEUROSURGICAL NURSING

This is an attractively produced work with its contents arranged in a logical fashion. It commences with an historical review to stimulate interest in the development of the subject, though with the expected transatlantic bias to neurosurgery.

There are chapters on anatomy and physiology of the nervous system, diagnostic methods, therapeutic techniques, surgical therapy, treatment of pain and commonly employed drugs, but the bulk of the book is devoted to a consideration of the special problems presented by the nursing of patients with neurological disorders. Here, deliberate eclecticism has been practised in order to give emphasis to those conditions occurring most frequently.

In this part the coverage is comprehensive and the text is admirably reinforced with many up-to-date references at the end of each chapter.

However, having said this, it is necessary to indicate that the techniques described, and views expressed, reflecting as they do American practice, will not have universal acceptance here.

There are a few minor irritating mistakes, especially in the early chapters, and a most major inaccuracy in Figure 17-16A where lumbar nerve roots are shown pursuing a course dorsal to the laminae!

In summary one would say that this is a well-conceived and pleasantly presented book which unfortunately appears to have been somewhat haphazardly produced and which is not likely to gain wide popularity here. It does not replace currently available British texts dealing with the same subject, though from its broad survey, provision of references, and excellent format, it provides an example that authors here may wish to emulate.

INVolUNTARY MOVEMENT DISORDERS

Stereotaxic surgery for disorders of tone and movement
is now accepted as a routine form of neurosurgical treatment. In large measure this is due to the pioneering work and industrious follow through of Irving Cooper. As so often before in neurophysiology, the detailed observations of clinicians have led to a new evaluation of the concepts of motor control. Indeed the term ‘extra-pyramidal system’ hardly appears in the book.

There is an interesting and valuable section on the pathophysiology of hypertonus and hyperkinesia. Cooper’s views on tremor are personal. They resemble that proposed by the reviewer but many will feel that the role of the cerebellum in resting tremor remains in doubt.

There is a synoptic review of the author’s experience of the surgical treatment of Parkinson’s disease, intention tremor, dystonia, hemiballismus, hemichorea, and the dyskinesias including valuable practical details.

A feature of the book is the use of superimposed serial tracings of cinematographic records to illustrate movement disorders before and after surgery. These drawings by Mary Lorenc provide wonderful teaching material. Macdonald Critchley has provided a concise historical foreword to a book which is a landmark in neurology.

J. A. SIMPSON


This volume is a very welcome addition to the atlases already available because it is a statistical approach to the variability of the thalamus and adjacent structures. It will be of practical usefulness to the surgeon and, indeed, grew from a need to determine the variability in size and position of the centro-medianum nucleus in which stereotaxic lesions were to be placed in the treatment of intractable pain. With the accumulation of considerable information, other thalamic nuclei, the borders of the thalamus, and related structures of importance in stereotaxic surgery were also included in the variability study. The method of preparation of the 38 cerebral hemispheres used for the initial studies on the reference points is described. The reasons for selecting the postero-inferior margin of the foramen of Monro and the posterior commissure in preference to other reference points are given. Twenty-six hemispheres from 14 brains were selected in the preparation of 1 mm coronal slices, from which the measurements were made for the statistical analysis of the nuclear and other structures. It is important to realize that these measurements were made of the most medial, lateral, superior, inferior, anterior, and posterior limits of each structure and not of its total outline. The first of the two main sections of the book deals with variability and probability studies of many structures including the main thalamic nuclei, the subthalamic nucleus, substantia nigra, red nucleus, zona incerta, the geniculate bodies, amygdala, globus pallidus, and the internal capsule. Coronal and sagittal variability profiles of each structure are given at the level of peak incidence to show the mean limits relative to the original reference points.

The second main part of the book consists of an atlas of line drawings and photographs. The line drawings are based on the statistical analysis. However, it is not immediately clear how the continuous outline of each structure was derived, particularly for the more complex shapes. Both coronal and sagittal line drawings are constructed and are displayed along with appropriate photomicrographs. The authors point out that the line drawings provide only a general guide for the selection of coordinates for target points, and that reference to the appropriate variability studies should always be made.

The terminology used is a modified version of Hassler’s classification.

The book will be of considerable value to the stereotaxic surgeon by providing statistical information concerning the limits of each structure in relation to the basic reference points. It will enable him to select the coordinates for a target with predictable accuracy. However, the precise localization of the structure in an individual patient must incorporate other methods—for example, electrophysiological techniques—but they are outside the scope of this useful book.

J. W. TURNER


As it is 20 years since Brodal’s Neuroanatomy first appeared, the second edition is virtually a new book (including most of the references). It does not replace standard textbooks on the gross anatomy of the CNS, but every neurologist or experimental neurophysiologist should own this one because of its unique qualities. The author has contrived to present an amazing amount of detail about the connections within the nervous system without losing the reader in detail or obscuring the functional significance. Indeed, the correlation between structure and function and the clinical implications are constantly stressed. Conclusions which are tentative or unconfirmed in the human are suitably indicated.

Naturally, the sections on the reticular formation, vestibular system, cerebellum, and cranial nerves are outstanding, but the whole book is good. Many will share Brodal’s feelings about ‘the limbic system’. This is a book to buy for frequent reference. It is worth every penny of its cost.

J. A. SIMPSON


This book is written by a thoracic surgeon primarily for colleagues in the same and allied fields. He deals with problems of blood gases and acid-base balance, but one of his principal interests is in the mechanics of pulmonary function, how the lungs move, what the compliance and air-way resistance are due to and what alters them, what determines distribution of gas in the lungs, and what problems affect expiration more than inspiration. The chemical and reflex control of the respiration, the work involved in breathing and the effect of age, chest injury, and lung disease on pulmonary function are also described. There is a chapter on respirators in which the author