Book reviews

ANATOMY OF THE NORMAL HUMAN THALAMUS By A. Dewulf. (Pp. 196; illustrated; £9.50.) Elsevier: Amsterdam. 1971.

This beautifully illustrated volume is the product of a prodigious amount of detailed work by the author. A normal human brain was placed in a giant macro-tome and 5 mm slices made in the coronal plane at an angle of 68° to the intercommissural plane. From these Nissl and myelin preparations of the thalamus were made at 1 mm intervals and photographed in a reference grid, and reproduced at $\times 12$ magnification. One hundred and twenty-five microphotographs at $\times 400$ magnification illustrate cells in all the zones of the thalamus listed, and at 1 mm intervals. Measurements of neurones and microneurones were made and percentage distributions of different sizes for all zones are given in histograms. From the photographs of the Nissl preparations four eminent neuroanatomists made line drawings to illustrate their own concepts of the different zones, together with their individual nomenclatures. The differences are as wide as would be anticipated. Subsequently a discussion was recorded between these anatomists, and Hassler and the author, in 1963. Although division based on function and the fibre connection was considered as important, nevertheless a standardized nomenclature was agreed upon, of those zones recognized by all the contributors, but apparently based on morphological criteria only. This is illustrated by a series of line drawings at 1 mm intervals, and is a simplified version of the Hassler system. Areas of contention such as the 'Zentralis' zones, and sub-divisions of the dorsal part of the lateral region, and its oral nuclei have been dropped. It is surprising to see no demarcation between Vpm and Vpl. It is doubtful if this will be the last word on the subject, however. One criticism is that a suggestion is made on page x where it is stated that 'if some disagreement persists on nomenclature or boundary of a nucleus it is at least possible to specify the exact localization of a lesion'. This presumably refers to measurements from reference points so that a lesion may be related to a gridded photograph in the atlas, and takes no account of the known nuclear variabilities related to given reference points.

The author, his colleagues and the publishers are to be congratulated on this beautifully produced book.

JOHN ANDREW

ESSENTIALS OF NEUROLOGY By J. N. Walton. 3rd edn. (Pp. xix+482; illustrated; £3.50.) Putman: London. 1971.

The third edition of this justifiably popular synopsis of neurology, coming five years after the second, proves once again that some authors, of whom Professor Walton is an outstanding example, have the facility for writing about the same subject both *in extenso* and in *précis*, yet while using the latter form are able to maintain good style and stimulate interest throughout. The book has been carefully revised and brought up to date, and some of those clinical conceptions which were a little uncertain when it first appeared are now given in their right perspective. This applies particularly to the aetiology and surgical treatment of syringomyelia, the existence and management of low pressure hydrocephalus, and the importance of herpes simplex encephalitis and its treatment. The use of L-dopa is admirably outlined, though not all would dismiss it so summarily from the management of atherosclerotic Parkinsonism. Amantadine has not gained a mention, but one wonders by the next edition how many of the older remedies may have fallen into the background too. In so concise a book as this one feels that something important must have been overlooked. If this is so, this reviewer can only say that he completely failed to spot it. The edition should enhance the fine reputation of its predecessors.

EDWIN R. BICKERSTAFF

KLINISCHE NEUROPATHOLOGIE By Gerd Peters (Pp. 496; illustrated; DM. 98.) Thieme: Stuttgart. 1970.

This is the second edition of Peters's well-known textbook of neuropathology which first appeared in 1951. The new edition, again written by one man, contains considerably more text and there are more pictures; some sections have been rewritten. One feels the author's great experience in the field and the book, as far as it goes, inspires confidence. The illustrations are excellent. The subject is systematically covered in 50 chapters which include the pathology of the nervous system in diseases mainly involving other organs, in endocrine disturbances, etc. There is no discussion of the general reactions of nervous tissue to insults and subjects like Wallerian degeneration, chromatolysis, or gliosis are mentioned only in passing. There is a sort of token chapter on intracranial neoplasms in which only tumours of the meninges and craniopharyngiomas are dealt with.

The book has an old-fashioned tone. There are no electronmicrographs and that whole subject receives only scant mention. Topical diseases like kuru and scrapie in sheep are mentioned but no literature is given (the one reference to kuru quoted in the text