cerebral palsy as a general guide to normal motor development.

GEOFFREY RUSHWORTH

THE GENERALIZED EPILEPSIES By Ernst Niedermeyer.
(Pp. 247; illustrated.*) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1972.

It is hard to judge the purpose of this book. It begins with a five-page review of the concepts of generalized and centrencephalic epilepsy, but the main bulk of the book is a review of 300 'almost consecutive' patients with epilepsy from the electroencephalographic laboratory of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, whose electroencephalogram showed generalized paroxysmal activity. Cases of hypsarrhythmia and cases with generalized abnormalities such as follow cardiac arrest were excluded. The author admits that the material does not represent a homogeneous group either clinically or electroencephalographically, and attempts to separate his cases into, among other groups, a group of 'pure culture idiopathic seizure disorders', and another of 'common generalized epilepsy atypical form'. The distinction between the groups was 'prompted by the presence of mild signs of acquired brain discare in the history . . .'. Minor focal features in the EEG were also reasons for listing patients in the second group. An account of the EEGs of these somewhat arbitrarily divided groups is then followed by a discussion which is probably useful, though marred by some linguistic infelicities—for example, 'What genetic counseling has strictly to avoid is marrying a partner who is likely to carry certain epileptic genes', and 'While the genetic factor is extremely elusive, the factor of age indicates the zenith and nadir of the generalized epilepsies in longitudinal view'. The publisher's editor must share some responsibility for letting such fuliginous statements adumbrate our understanding.

ANTHONY HOPKINS

METABOLISM OF THE NERVE TISSUE IN RELATION TO ION MOVEMENTS IN VITRO AND IN SITU By M. Ruščák, and D. Ruščáková. (Pp. 171; illustrated; \$11.50.) University Park Press: Baltimore. 1972.

This book describes research in neurochemistry done by the authors during the last 10 years; it is practically a collection of research papers, translated from the original Czech and slightly shortened. To me (a neurophysiologist, not a neurochemist) the experiments seem well-designed and the inferences usually fair, though occasionally stated with more generality than the experiments support. The book is well-written in detail, but not well organized as a whole.

* Price not stated.

Non-expert readers will not easily see how its content is related to neurophysiology as a whole, or even to other aspects of neurochemistry.

G. S. BRINDLEY

INTRODUCTION TO NEUROSCIENCE By J. Minckler.
(Pp. 420; illustrated.*) Mosby: St. Louis. 1972.

This book is basically about neuroanatomy, including histology, electron microscopy, and tissue culture. There are brief accounts of neurochemistry and electrophysiology and psychobiology, together with a chapter on the cybernetic approach to brain function. There are many good and original line diagrams but there are also many two-tone reproductions of brain sections which although well reproduced and clearly labelled are of somewhat limited value. The whole book is on sensible non-gloss paper which nonetheless takes all the illustrations adequately. The team of authors seems unduly large for the scope and level of the book, and inevitably the depth and style varies somewhat between them. At the student level for which the book is intended it relates to the North American scene; in the present climate of opinion about anatomy teaching in Britain it would be likely to be considered too complex. But for honours science students, and those working in the wide range of neurosciences, it would be a useful introduction.

BRYAN JENNETT

VASCULAR DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM. PARTS I and II. VOLS 11 and 12 of HANDBOOK OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY Edited by P. J. Vinken and G. W. Bruyn. (Part 1, 719; Part 2, 696; illustrated; Part 1 Hfl 260.00; Part 2, Hfl 240.00.) North-Holland: Amsterdam. 1972.

Two volumes of the *Handbook* are devoted to the vascular diseases of the nervous system (including the spinal cord). Many contributions are splendid and provide extremely valuable accounts of the anatomy and traditional clinical disorders of the cerebrospinal vasculature. Unfortunately, the work has an old-fashioned air about it. The recent major advances in knowledge about cerebral blood flow are not adequately dealt with, and one searches in vain for an appreciation of the importance of 'watersheds' in the localization of ischaemic lesions. The account of hypertensive encephalopathy is very good, but other contributions on the role of 'functional' disorders of the vasculature as determinants of apoplexy appear to be expressions of opinion rather than presentation of evidence. The two large volumes could be reduced considerably by judicious editing, as some items are duplicated. The section on EEG aspects is certainly excessive.