

packed with important facts, and well argued to conclusions wherever there is an argument that can be stated concisely. Where an argument exists but is too long to deserve a place in a small book, Professor Eccles usually states the conclusion dogmatically, which I think is the right (because transparent) policy. Only occasionally does he dress up a shaky or incomplete argument to make it look better than it is. For a few of the dogmatic statements I wish references had been given—for example, that excitatory and inhibitory synapses can be distinguished by electronmicroscopy (p. 8), and that the inhibitory transmitters of the mammalian CNS are glycine and  $\gamma$ -aminobutyric acid (p. 81). These statements have for some years been defensible but not proven; it would be useful to be told what new work has now established them as certain.

G. S. BRINDLEY

TRANSACTIONS OF THE AMERICAN NEUROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION 1972 Vol. 97. Edited by Samuel A. Trufant. (Pp. 392; \$13.50.) Springer: New York, 1973.

This volume is the record of the 97th Annual Meeting of the American Neurological Association held in Chicago in June 1972.

Forty-nine papers with their consequent discussions are printed verbatim, together with Dr. Paul Bucy's presidential address and the Foster Elting Bennett Memorial Lecture given on that occasion by Dr. Julius Metrakos. Paul Bucy's address is analytical and critical of American neurological practice, and makes an eloquent plea for the need to continue the education of the clinical neurologist after he has been trained. Busy clinicians in Britain may sigh wistfully over that.

Julius Metrakos's lecture on the theory and practice of medical genetics in neurology fulfills part at least of that need. It is concise yet wide ranging, challenges clinicians to think in terms of molecular biology and statistics, and holds out prospects of therapy. No neurologist could afford to ignore the message that it conveys.

The papers read and discussed cover a miscellany of subjects. The discussions in particular are full of interest, of pointed questions and of personal experiences, and at times they are very entertaining. Each paper is, of course, quite short, but their publication might have been more useful had a few key references been given after each. Of particular interest are Horwich, Porro, and Posner's contention that subacute sensory neuropathy in the adult is almost pathognomonic of an underlying systemic cancer; Lipton and Teasdall's follow-up study of 34 cases of acute transverse myelopathy in adults, an entity of varied aetiology and prognosis, the poorest results

being related to spinal shock; Wasterlain and Plum's elegant demonstration of the vulnerability of the developing rat brain to seizures; and the interesting observations by Katzman and colleagues on CSF dynamics in presenile dementia.

Abstracts of a further 56 papers 'read by title' are also given. Many of these reflect the intense study of the chemotherapy of Parkinsonism and its complications, and the perhaps swindling role of surgery in this disease. It is always a pleasure to read Miller Fisher's articles, since they usually convey his clinical experiences and judgements so well. His brief query, 'Is pressure on nerves and roots a common cause of pain?' is no exception. Similarly Saba and King's observations on prodromal signs and symptoms of aneurysms leading 'to the diagnosis while many (patients) remain favourable candidates for treatment' deserves emphasis and publicity.

The 1972 *Transactions* offer a splendid package of what is currently going round in American neurological circles.

IAN D. MELVILLE

PATHOLOGY OF MENTAL RETARDATION By L. Crome and J. Stern. (Pp. 544; illustrated; £9.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh, 1972.

The first edition of this book was so well received by clinicians and pathologists that one would not expect many radical changes. The second edition, however, is more than 100 pages larger than the first, there is an extremely useful additional chapter incorporating synopses of some 200 syndromes, a wealth of new material has been added, and the bibliography has been greatly expanded. Indeed, it is probably as up to date as any book of this type can be. One of its great assets is that the authors, experts in the fields of pathology and biochemistry respectively, clearly have such wide-ranging clinical interests that they can write authoritatively on all aspects of mental retardation. It can be recommended as the standard textbook on the pathology of mental retardation without hesitation, and one that should be of interest to anyone who encounters cases of mental retardation.

J. HUME ADAMS

#### NOTICE

THIRD INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN PEDIATRIC NEUROLOGY AND NEUROSURGERY 27 February–2 March 1974, Mexico City. Details from Dr. Fernando Rueda-Franco, Neurology and Neurosurgery Service, Hospital Del Nino IMAN, Av. Insurgentes Sur 3700-C, Mexico 22, D.F. (Mexico).