One cannot help but think that Ramon y Cajal would have approved of his successors.

D. G. F. HARRIMAN

GAS CHROMATOGRAPHY—MASS SPECTROMETRY IN NEUROBIOLOGY By E. Costa and B. Holmstedt. (Pp. 175; illustrated; Dfl. 44.) North Holland: Amsterdam. 1973.

This is an easily digested book which deals with the elucidation and determination of a range of drugs and their metabolites, and other endogenous tissue constituents of known structure. It is possible that the link gas chromatography—mass spectrometry is not the rapid, ideal means of elucidating the structure of unknown biochemical substances that some of us fondly imagined, for seven of the 13 chapters deal with pharmacological or toxicological problems. The reason appears to be that the equipment is being used primarily as an expensive detector of extreme selectivity and sensitivity. The mass spectrometer is operating as a means to determine drugs and their metabolites of known structure or—in the case of the metabolites—nearly known structure. The power of this modern approach is emphasized by the determinations of such endogenous neurotransmitters as acetylcholine in various tissues and brain and pineal indole alkylamines. Another example of its value as a clinical tool is shown by the quantitative determination of 5-HAA and IAA in CSF of depressed patients, the finding that the tryptamine metabolite behaves similarly to 5-HIAA may be in keeping with the tryptamine theory of endogenous depression, and the labelling of the brain homovanillic acid of mice by allowing them simply to dwell for a short time in ^{18}O -enriched atmospheres demonstrates that it is possible to label brain catecholamines *in vivo*, and thus avoid the problems of radiation. HVA is chosen as it is the main dopamine metabolite leaving the brain; thus, the actual brain component of the total homovanillic acid in the urine can be easily assessed. The demonstration that propranolol forms a glycol metabolite in mouse brain, only minutes after an injection, in a like manner to the catecholamine conversion to their respective glycols, gives an indication of the powerful though expensive equipment that is available to the pharmacologists.

P. O. TOSELAND

COMPENDIUM OF THE EPILEPSIES By N. Niedermeyer. (Pp. 334; illustrated; \$14.75.) Thomas: Springfield, Ill. 1974.

This book contains a great deal of useful information about most aspects of epilepsy and will repay careful study. Although the author is a clinical electrographer

he has clearly taken a great interest in the clinical aspects of his subject over a period of many years. The book is said to have been written for general practitioners and medical students as well as for specialists, but its wealth of detail does perhaps make it more suited for the latter than the former.

The first half of the book is devoted to basic principles and to clinical considerations. In the middle there is a single short chapter on such 'borderland' topics as migraine, paroxysmal abdominal pain, and attacks of vertigo, but these are dealt with only very cursorily. The remainder of the book is concerned with diagnosis and management, and includes chapters on the psychiatric aspects and neurosurgical treatment of epilepsy.

Not unnaturally, the subject matter of this book reflects the author's personal experience in the field of epilepsy and, as such, it is a particularly interesting contribution to the literature. It also contains much useful practical advice which could be applied with benefit to many patients with epilepsy by any clinician who is prepared to make use of it.

MAURICE PARSONAGE

NEUROSCIENCE: A LABORATORY MANUAL By James E. Skinner. (Pp. 244; illustrated; price not stated.) Saunders: Philadelphia. 1971.

The title of this small book is misleading but it could be useful for research assistants without background experience and little time available to complete a project. In a very short space it gives an adequate account of electrical activity of the brain, basic electronics, recording of bioelectric potentials, and the elements of neuroanatomy and histology of the brain. Unfortunately, the anatomical section (which includes a dissection guide) is based on the cow and sheep brain but the stereotaxic data and experimental procedures refer to the rat. There are useful instructions, with line drawings, on the preparation of the rat for stereotaxic recording, including the construction of intracranial implant devices.

J. A. SIMPSON

TECHNIQUES IN NEUROHISTOLOGY H. M. Ralis, R. A. Beesley, and Z. A. Ralis. (Pp. 162; illustrated; £3.40.) Butterworth: London. 1973.

This little book will be found useful in many laboratories concerned with morbid anatomy, both general and neuropathological. There are chapters on the anatomy of the nervous system for technicians, on tissue preparation, on general and neurohistological staining methods, as well as brief notes on additional techniques such as preparation for electron and fluorescence microscopy.

The chapter on general staining methods at first seems redundant, as these are available in larger