Book reviews

ESSAYS ON THE NERVOUS SYSTEM A Festschrift for Professor J. Z. Young Edited by R. Bellairs and E. G. Gray. (Pp. 511; illustrated; £11.50.) Clarendon Press: Oxford. 1974.

It is impossible, in a short review, to do justice to a collection of essays by 20 authors, in which the common factor is homage to a great teacher and researcher on his 67th birthday. Professor J. Z. Young, F.R.S. has been head of the Anatomy Department at University College London for 29 years during which he has inspired and collaborated with many of the most honoured names in modern neurobiology. His fascinating study of the octopus nervous system is known to all, but perhaps the practising neurologist is most familiar with his wartime contributions on the regeneration of mammalian nerves. It is, then, not surprising that the chapters on nerve injuries, nerve growth, synaptic morphology, and skeletal muscle are of most immediate value to the clinician. Every chapter is an excellent survey of an aspect of the nervous system in which the author has specialized. Naturally, anatomical studies are prominent, but by no means dominant. Indeed, if the appointment of an experimental zoologist to a chair of anatomy ever required justification, here it is. Each of the distinguished group of contributors moves freely from structure to function. This is a book for the clinical neurologist to browse in, and a good collection of reviews for the experimentalist in many fields. Our best wishes to J.Z. in his retirement.

J. A. SIMPSON

REFLEX ACTIVITY OF THE SPINAL CORD By R. S. Creed, D. Denny-Brown, J. C. Eccles, E. G. T. Liddell, and C. S. Sherrington. (Pp. 216; illustrated; £4.00.) Oxford University Press: London. 1972.

How many monographs on current research will command a reprint in 40 years? Here is one which is still so important that the reviewer's excuse for a belated report is that he was compelled to re-read it from cover to cover, for this book and its predecessor, Sherrington's *Integrative Action of the Nervous System*, are the seminal studies in our understanding of the coordinated function of the nervous system. Annotated by D. P. C. Lloyd, it is shown to be extremely relevant to modern studies on the spinal cord (though Dr Lloyd has reservations on interpretations based on post-synaptic potentials). The phenomenal growth of neurophysiology based on the

microelectrode and d.c. amplifier has clarified the functions of nerve cells and synapses at the unitary level but how little have we advanced since this book was published in our understanding of the functioning of groups of neurones, let alone the intact nervous system? How little has the practice of clinical neurology been influenced by microelectrode studies when compared with those of the Sherrington school? To pose these questions is to understand why there is a continuing demand for this classical work. We are indebted to Professors D. P. C. Lloyd and A. K. McIntyre for the beautiful reprint and its addenda.

J. A. SIMPSON

MUSCLE BIOPSY: A MODERN APPROACH By Victor Dubowitz and Michael H. Brooke. (Pp. 486; illustrated; £7.50.) Saunders: London. 1973.

Volume 2 in the series *Major Problems in Neurology* is highly recommended. Written by two outstanding British and American contributors to the recent advance in knowledge of muscle histochemistry, the book is a valuable summary of the state of the art in 1973 and must be the standard reference work on the subject. Even a cursory reading makes it obvious that something must be done with respect to classification of muscle and other diseases. Clinical entities are shown to subsume many apparently different pathological and electrophysiological disorders and it is natural that the pathologist should claim to be the final arbiter in classification. But it is clear that no histological picture is unique to any particular clinical syndrome; the clinician may beg to doubt the validity of other bases for classification. Before the rise of histochemistry we were taught that biopsy of muscle was of little value because the muscle had a limited repertoire of response. The repertoire has expanded beyond the ken of all but the dedicated but there are still few diseases in which the pathologist working 'blind' can predict the clinical syndrome or, in many instances, be certain whether he is dealing with a myopathy or with a primary disorder of lower motor neurones. In this situation it is tempting to adopt a unitary hypothesis—that all muscular diseases are due to sick neurones. 'All cats have four legs so everything with four legs is a cat' is still a false syllogism even if the 'legs' are highly coloured histological pictures or electrical phenomena. One misses colour in the numerous illustrations but the black and white reproductions

are entirely adequate and allow the reader to concentrate on the essential phenomena. The book would not have suffered, as a practical manual, by drastic reduction of the number of illustrative cases. On the other hand it would have gained by inclusion of a chapter on motor endplate biopsy. There is a good chapter by H. E. Neville on electronmicroscopy of muscle. The authors and publishers are to be congratulated on producing this valuable and timely book at such a reasonable price.

J. A. SIMPSON

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PSYCHIATRY Edited by C. Müller. (Pp. 592; illustrated; DM 98.) Springer: Berlin. 1973.

This excellent publication was made possible by the cooperation of 57 German and Swiss psychiatrists of whom each is an authority in a special subject. The various psychopathological concepts are objectively and informatively presented. The volume does not intend to replace standard text books on psychiatry, but it will be a great help to students and to all those who work in fields which border on psychiatry. Even to the trained psychiatrist it will be an occasional aid in supplying adequate information should he want to consult it on some specific concept with which he may not be very familiar.

The book's approach is catholic. The essay on 'epilepsies' contains nearly 11,000 words with 18 references to the literature, while the essay on existential analysis has about 9,000 words with 29 literature references, among them a reference to a publication in which more complete references may be found. Important disease entities—for example, alcoholism, drug dependence and the schizophrenic illnesses—are particularly well presented, and conflicting theories are put before the reader in an objective manner.

The book maintains an even, high standard throughout, and for that thanks must be due to the editor whose labour must surely have been most strenuous.

J. SCHORSTEIN

THE SENSE OF SMELL AND ITS ABNORMALITIES By E. Douek. (Pp. 243; illustrated; £5.50.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1974.

At first sight a book devoted to the function and disorders of a single cranial nerve appears somewhat daunting. Such apprehension as may be inspired by the title is also accentuated by the fact that the examination of the olfactory nerve is so often neglected in the clinical examination. Mr Douek quickly dispels such fears by providing an intriguing account which is relevant to the clinical practice of all neurologists, neurosurgeons, and ENT surgeons.

He describes logically the anatomy and electrophysiology of the nose and olfactory system, and then reviews many of the theories appertaining to the sense of smell. This is followed by a comprehensive account of clinical tests, including olfactometry. He then provides a detailed description of the symptoms and investigations of abnormalities of smell, whether determined by peripheral, local, or intracranial lesions. The chapter on the legal aspects is of particular value because of the frequency of the claim of anosmia in medico-legal assessment of head injury patients.

Mr Douek's approach is essentially eclectic; this sometimes leads to rather unnecessary accounts of straightforward neurological diagnosis—for example, he describes a routine for investigating cerebral tumours, and a classification of the epilepsies. However, in dealing with his own extensive experience of disorders of olfaction he is both discursive and critical, and hence provides a most valuable survey based on fundamental principles of disordered anatomy and physiology.

The book is nicely produced with clear illustrations. Inaccuracies are few, although he does cite two references to his own work which suggest they were published 60 years apart! This is a most useful handbook and is strongly recommended.

JOHN PEARCE

TEXTBOOK OF CHILD NEUROLOGY By John H. Menkes. (Pp. 583; illustrated; £10.70.) Lea and Febiger: Philadelphia. U.K. distributors, Kimpton: London. 1974.

John Menkes has succeeded in writing a most interesting and valuable book on paediatric neurology. Succeeded perhaps where others failed because, in its unashamedly biased way, it reflects his particular interests and approach. Well-known for his neurometabolic research and even eponymously linked with a disease which is curiously almost an obverse of Wilson's disease, Menkes has produced a text with a strong biochemical and research emphasis, mostly written by himself.

My first reaction was of disappointment at the relatively scant clinical descriptions, but on reflection, perhaps it is unwise for a text like this to attempt to compete with teaching at the bedside. Sections on CNS malformations, infections, and learning disorders are presented succinctly by Gabriel, Weil, and Kinsbourne respectively. Bibliographies are helpful and extensive, and reasonably updated with a few 1973 references included.

The use of illustrations is restrained, and this is probably reflected in the price, which is modest by transatlantic standards.

The book can be commended as a reference text