Book reviews

DISORDERS OF VOLUNTARY MUSCLE Edited by John M. Walton. (Pp. 1149; illustrated; £15.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1974.

It is impossible to do justice to this excellent book in a short review. The third edition has been extensively modified and enlarged; many chapters are completely rewritten, and others added by new contributors, to give the necessary breadth and depth to keep pace with the recent advances and new concepts in neuromuscular diseases. The mass of information, though formidable, is clearly presented, and assimilation is aided by the subdivision of the text into four main sections, each a comprehensive review of anatomy and physiology, pathology, clinical problems, and the electrophysiological diagnostic techniques respectively.

The expanded section on peripheral neuropathy and the inclusion of the anterior horn cell diseases serves to emphasize the growing recognition of the reciprocal interaction of nerve and muscle, while the contributions on tissue culture, histochemistry, and electrodiagnostic methods, to mention but three, may point the way to the future greater understanding of the pathophysiology of these diseases.

Despite its position as a major work of reference, the book remains eminently readable. To the research worker, the clinician, and all who wish to improve their understanding of neuromuscular diseases, this book cannot be too highly recommended.

J. P. BALLANTYNE

THE PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT OF HEAD INJURIES By John M. Potter. 3rd edn. (Pp. 98; illustrated; £2.) Lloyd-Luke: London. 1974.

Head injuries account for half of all acute surgical admissions to children's hospitals, a third of admissions to accident wards, and a quarter of adult surgical emergencies. Many are mild but may develop complications, thousands are admitted for 'observation' every year—but few doctors or nurses know what to look for. This book tells them, and a lot more besides. It will make its readers safer, and should make looking after head injuries an interesting challenge for them rather than an inconvenient chore. Potter's pamphlet is a classic miniature which, in a hundred pages, has space for wit and wisdom, for hard facts and for apt quotations. It ought to be in everyone's pocket who has anything to do with

head injuries. It would pay the defence organizations to issue it to all their newly fledged members. Head injuries in Britain, as in many countries, are the Cinderella of the hospital service, dealt with differently in various hospitals, often passed on from one doctor to another, with no one discipline accepting full responsibility. No one seems to want to deal with head injuries, but few doctors can avoid them, because they become a problem alike in accident departments (for whichever types of surgeon happen to find themselves there), for family doctors, for rehabilitationists, and even for those in occupational medicine, and those concerned with medico-legal matters. All of them would benefit from reading Potter.

BRYAN JENNETT

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF SYNAPSES Edited by George D. Pappas and Dominick P. Purpura. (Pp. 308; illustrated; \$24.50.) Raven Press: New York. 1972.

This first monograph of the New York Society of Electron Microscopists is strongly recommended to neurologists who require a concise but comprehensive account of recent advances in knowledge about structure and functions of central synapses. The 13 excellent chapters display the hallmarks of firm editorial control. Each chapter first outlines its scope, then presents the material in logical form and ends with a good summary. Redundancy is reduced by good references. Where recent comprehensive reviews exist, the authors draw attention to them, give an adequate summary, and then devote their own space to new evidence or revised views since the last review. This is not just another 'Proceedings': it is a well-produced systematic survey. There is no comparable publication.

J. A. SIMPSON

INTRACELLULAR STAINING IN NEUROBIOLOGY By S. B. Kater and C. Nicholson. (Pp. 332; illustrated; \$29.20.) Springer: Berlin. 1973.

The compilation of this beautiful, but expensive, book on the techniques and applications of the new and valuable methods of intracellular staining should be welcomed by workers in anatomy. The book is the product of a two day symposium held in Iowa in 1972, supplemented by technical and historical details supplied by the editors.