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.

The complexity of the apparatus required for applying the intracellular dyes, and the techniques required for subsequent study and analysis, will confine the techniques to research departments but their potential value is enormous. The filling of single neurones with these dyes and substances allows intracellular anatomical relationships to be studied in a new way which will certainly yield new information.

The only fault one can find with the presentation of the many excellent illustrations is the absence of size scales on the photomicrographs and electron-micrographs.

D. DOYLE

TUMORS OF THE EXTRA-ADRENAL PARAGANGLION SYSTEM—INCLUDING CHEMORECEPTORS AFIP Fasc. 2nd Series By G. G. Glenner and P. M. Grimley. (Pp. 90; illustrated; \$4.50.) Armed Forces Institute of Pathology: Washington, D.C. 1974.

This new volume of the *Fascicles* maintains the high tradition of the series, and will remain one of the comprehensive and authoritative editions for many years. The authors give a very clear account of the anatomy of the chemoreceptors and paraganglia, with adequate information and references to embryology, physiology, and comparative studies. The illustrations—diagrams, dissected specimens, light microscopic and electron microscopic preparations—which have been culled from experts around the globe are of excellent quality.

Every pathology department should have this book for reference. Departments which do not automatically purchase the new editions should consider this as a selective purchase from the series.

D. DOYLE

MANUAL OF BASIC NEUROPATHOLOGY By R. Escourolle and J. Poirier. (Pp. 209; illustrated; £4.05.) Saunders: London. 1973.

Intended for medical students and those beginning their training in neurology, this little book was originally published in the French language. Its immediate success justifies an English translation (by Dr Lucien J. Rubinstein) which will undoubtedly increase its circle of admirers. Only those who have tried to write a simplified but correct and comprehensive text for beginners will recognize how well the authors have succeeded. A well-chosen, concise text with excellent line diagrams, tables, and beautifully reproduced photographs provide an admirable introductory account of neuropathology. The hydrodynamic theory of syringomyelia is not included, and a few sections suffer from excessive condensation but there is no doubt that the book

successfully fulfils its objective. Indeed, senior clinicians would be glad to have this basic manual.

J. A. SIMPSON

POSTOPERATIVE COMPLICATIONS IN NEUROSURGICAL PRACTICE By N. H. Horwitz and H. V. Rizzoli. (Pp. 427; illustrated; Price not stated.) Krieger: New York. 1973.

The first edition of this book in 1967 was well-received and covered a much wider range of neurosurgical knowledge than its title indicated. The present volume is a reprint with certain additions and is not described as a second edition. As far as can be seen the bibliography has not been extended beyond 1965, but it is very complete up to that date. Every aspect of neurosurgery is dealt with apart from the surgery of abnormal movements, and of epilepsy. In addition to its main purpose, which is a description of postoperative neurosurgical complications, the book introduces each topic with a historical review and attempts to assess the efficacy of procedures, and reviews the literature very thoroughly for this purpose. It is a most comprehensive account of neurosurgical treatment, not by any means as depressing as its title would suggest. It is written in a clear and easy style, and would prove of value to the trainee as well as to the experienced neurosurgeon. A copy should be available in any unit library or even on a neurosurgical ward. It is a mine of useful information and can be warmly recommended.

JOHN HANKINSON

NEUROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS IN BLOOD DISEASES N. D'Eramo and M. Levi. (Pp. 304; illustrated; £9.50.) Harvey Miller & Medcalf: London. 1973.

This book has been translated from Italian and the English edition bears the imprimatur of Maxwell M. Wintrobe. Idiosyncrasies of the translation interfere with the meaning of the text—for example, 'papillar oedema' is not immediately familiar to English readers. Ambiguous terms are used: the word 'marrow' when referring to the spinal cord might well cause confusion in a book on blood diseases. Neologisms such as 'perniciosisiform' are painfully prominent.

The authors' creditable efforts to be comprehensive have been at the cost of critical selectivity. There are descriptions of contradictory methods of treatment with no guidance as to which may be the more appropriate. There are bald statements which are contrary to ordinary experience: treatment with vitamin B₁₂ is said to achieve total regression of the neurological disorder in subacute combined de-