ADVANCES AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS IN NEUROSURGERY Edited by H. Krayenbuhl. (Pp. 210; illustrated; DM 79.) Springer: Wien. 1974.

This is the first in a proposed series of volumes to present important recent advances in neurosurgery and in related areas. It is to be a combined European exercise and all the contributions will be in English. The reasons given, which amply justify the production of such a series, are (1) the lack of any organized common European postgraduate training system for young neurosurgeons, and (2) the language barriers, which impede the exchange of neurosurgical findings in Europe more than in other parts of the world. The editors are neurosurgeons of the highest reputation and in addition are all experienced and skilled in teaching techniques. It is intended that all contributions will be submitted to the entire editorial board before publication of any volume, and in the first volume this plan has resulted in a very high standard of treatment of the chosen subjects. It is also intended that each volume will continue to consist of two parts, as indicated in the title—the first dealing with neurosurgical knowledge, and the second giving detailed accounts of technical procedures. On this occasion the first part consists of contributions on the following topics: (1) non-operative management of intracranial hypertension; (2) chronic adult hydrocephalus; (3) surgery of craniostenosis in advanced cases; (4) extradural haematoma.

The two papers on technique are on supratentorial craniotomy and on the removal of extramedullary benign spinal cord tumours.

This is a beautifully produced volume, with an extensive and up-to-date bibliography and well represented diagrams and radiographs. It can be recommended confidently as a reliable source of information for neurosurgeons and trainees alike, and one anticipates with pleasure the appearance of subsequent volumes in this series.

JOHN HANKINSON

DISORDERS OF THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM By R. H. Johnson and D. M. K. Spalding. (Pp. 300; illustrated; £6.50.) Blackwell: Oxford. 1974.

The appearance of this volume will rightly be welcomed by general physicians and neurologists alike. The authors, who have themselves made a distinguished contribution to research into autonomic disorders, have now provided a most thorough, scholarly and readable review of a field which is quite inadequately covered in most textbooks, perhaps excusably because progress in knowledge has been so rapid in the past few years. This is the reason why a fresh review was so badly needed. There are, of course, still unanswered questions—for example,

about the place of defects of renin release in idiopathic orthostatic hypotension, the role of sympathetic cholinergic fibres and possible adrenalin release in the mechanism of fainting, and the conundrum of causalgia. In the discussion of the treatment of idiopathic orthostatic hypotension, I would have suggested a higher place for postural retraining, including sleeping erect, in order to make use of residual sympathetic vasoconstrictor reflexes which in some cases can return disabled patients to modest activity without the use of vasoconstrictor drugs. All in all, this book represents a very solid achievement and can hardly be too highly recommended.

CEREBRAL VASCULAR DISEASE: 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SALZBURG 1972 Edited by J. S. Meyer, H. Lechner, M. Reivich, and O. Eichhorn. (Pp. 280; illustrated; DM42.) Thieme: Stuttgart. 1973.

The international conference held biennially in Salzburg is devoted to cerebral vascular disease, and brings together clinicians, physiologists, pathologists, and others in basic and applied sciences. It has deliberately been kept from growing too large, and has a predominantly European flavour with relatively few contributions from America and Asia.

In a round table meeting of this kind, the papers should serve primarily as a stimulus for discussion, and it is to be regretted that it has not been possible to include this in the published proceedings, as is done at the Princeton conference on a similar topic.

A further criticism of the 6th conference is the absence of any coherent theme. There are papers on all manner of topics, from biostatistics to normal pressure hydrocephalus, and from platelet aggregation to Doppler flowmeter, but none to link the findings together. There is a useful summary by J. S. Meyer, but one looks in vain for his conclusions or critical evaluation of the widely different contributions.

On the other hand, some of the papers are of a very high quality; particularly outstanding is that of Reivich and colleagues, on the relationship between blood flow and metabolism after middle cerebral artery occlusion in the baboon, and the clinical study of Held and colleagues on the subclavian steal syndrome. Many papers, however, deal with work which has subsequently appeared elsewhere, and not all are worth a second reading. One unusual feature of this conference is the inclusion of contributions from the Soviet Union which are not readily available to workers in the western world.

The proceedings are well-produced and illustrated by the German publishers and have appeared without excessive delay. There is also an index, a feature rarely found in publications of this kind.