

research workers will wish to study this book which, at the price, they will have to borrow from libraries.

D. DOYLE

NEUROLOGICAL AND SENSORY DISORDERS IN THE ELDERLY Edited by William S. Fields. (Pp. 244; illustrated; \$19.50.) Stratton: New York. 1975.

Proceedings of symposia, with verbatim accounts of discussion following individual papers, have advantages and disadvantages. In this book there are good formal papers by well-known American neurologists, and glimpses of informality and humour in discussion so often lacking in original presentations. On the other hand, such a book takes a long time to compile, and by its publication there is much that is out of date. It is not clear when the symposium was held but some clue comes from speakers saying they were looking forward to the time when the combination of L-dopa with decarboxylase inhibitors became generally available, and that computerised axial tomography might hold promise for the future. How much value is there in using expensive space to describe in discussion an interesting case that the speaker rather inaccurately remembers? The main papers are excellent, with notable contributions on the neurological complications of skeletal disease in the aged, and the degree to which strokes should be investigated, and the potential for prevention and treatment. It is good to see aspirin recommended in selected patients in place of conventional anticoagulants, but astonishing to read that a physician of one's own vintage considered that before penicillin very few people lived beyond 60 (and not surprising that several pages are taken up disputing this!) It is a very interesting book, and well worth reading, and perhaps it is unfair that the best remembered paragraph defines a 'rich' (as opposed to a well-to-do) American as one with a place in Florida, a Caribbean island, at least one Lear Jet aircraft, and enough Cadillacs to stand on while washing it.

EDWIN R. BICKERSTAFF

THE LIMBIC SYSTEM By Robert L. Isaacson. (Pp. 292; illustrated; \$17.94.) Plenum: New York. 1974. The author disarms criticism by devoting a preface to describing his bias towards destructive lesions and electrophysiological studies on the rat and cat, and in his selection of references. Within these limits, he has provided a useful summary of the structure and function of the limbic system (in which he includes the hypothalamus, hippocampus and its septal area) for advanced students in psychology and the neurosciences. References to human studies are scanty but in general the limbic system is equated with the

'paleomammalian' brain of MacLean, and considered to have inhibitory control over the fundamental core 'protoreptilian' brain, an inhibition which he conceives as being necessary for development of learning sets—or forgetting of previously learned sets (a concept for which there is some evidence from human studies). The hippocampus can be seen as a mechanism which suppresses 'innate' or early learned responses when the unexpected happens. The amygdala is seen as accentuating the conditions of arousal and activation of the hypothalamic systems when external conditions are appropriate, a function in some ways opposed to those of the hippocampus. The neocortical brain anticipates the future. It extrapolates from the past experience of the limbic system with the valuable storage device of language.

The more conservative reader will reject the interpretations, but some conceptual schema is useful for storing and correlating data. This book is quite helpful from that point of view.

J. A. SIMPSON

PRIMATE MODELS OF NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS (*Advances In Neurology*, Volume 10) Edited by B. S. Meldrum and C. D. Marsden. (Pp. 362; illustrated; \$25.95) Raven Press: New York. 1975.

Attitudes towards research on subhuman primates have recently altered. There has been a general hardening in the reactions towards the use of primates for experimental purposes unless the results could not readily be obtained in a non-primate species. Furthermore, for a variety of reasons, the availability of wild-trapped animals has become increasingly uncertain and there are genuine fears of an ecological nature as to the consequences of large scale trapping of some species. A switch to purpose-bred animals may become desirable, and if so, would have far reaching consequences, not least in financial terms and in the time required before such breeding facilities could be established. The devotion of volume 10 of *Advances In Neurology* to an examination of the value of primate models of neurological disorders is therefore appropriate. It is based on a symposium held at the Institute of Psychiatry, London, in 1974, which was devoted to an assessment of the achievements of primate research in this field.

The contributions cover a wide range of topics and have been grouped into four sections, depending upon subject matter: motor disorders, epilepsy, cerebrovascular disease, metabolism and degenerative disorders, and virus diseases. It is not possible in a short review to detail individual contributions, but in general these are authoritative accounts by individuals directly involved in neurological research