Book Reviews

Brain's Diseases of the Nervous System 8th Edition Revised by John N. Walton. (Pp. 1277; illustrated; £17.50.) Oxford University Press: Oxford, New York, Toronto. 1977.

If you want a job well done, take it to a busy man. Professor Walton has now had the opportunity to impose his own style on this well known textbook and it emerges as the best reference book now available for the clinical neurologist. It now contains so many references to rare syndromes as to satisfy all likely requirements for this function, but in doing so it has completed the transition from a book suitable for the advanced student to one which is more suitable for reference than for learning from. In a book of this size (20% bigger than the last edition) it is not difficult to disagree on the space devoted to different subjects, or to feel that criticisms made of previous editions remain valid. But a book must be judged as a whole and by this test it emerges as by far the best for the practising neurologist. The new material must have been gathered and written over a considerable period, yet the references are extremely up-to-date. A book must go to press some time and it is inevitable that something will be missed, such as the possible danger (to the operator) of brain biopsy, but this book is much the best account of modern neurological practice—a continuing monument to Russell Brain and a credit to its new author.

J. A. SIMPSON

Electrical Activity of the Nervous System By Mary A. B. Brazier. (Pp. 248; illustrated; £8.00.) Pitman Medical: Tunbridge Wells. 1976.

In the fourth edition of her book, Dr Brazier has once again produced a sophisticated and compact survey of present knowledge and current concepts of the electrical activity of the nervous system. The book contains some 16 chapters, many with a short historical introduction, and the student is led through the basic electrophysiology of axonal membranes and synaptic trans-

mission, and progressively in later chapters through a consideration of the electrical activity of the spinal cord, brain stem, cerebellum, and special senses with a final chapter on the human electroencephalogram. Each of the chapters is a clear and concise, but not uncritical, review of knowledge in this discipline. The author has kept redundant prose to an absolute minimum such that a very considerable amount of information is accommodated. However the style is clear and to the point, and the reader will not flag despite the concentration of information.

The book is well illustrated with, in the main, semi-diagrammatic line drawings and sharply reproduced electrical recordings, and there is an excellent list of key references at the end of each section for those who wish to delve deeper into the subject.

The author has undoubtedly achieved her aim of bringing together under one cover a survey of the electrical activity of the nervous system. I particularly enjoyed this book and can thoroughly recommend it.

J. P. BALLANTYNE

Brain Blood Supply Edited by G. I. Mchedlishvili, A. G. B. Kovach, and I. Nyary. (Pp. 320; illustrated; price not stated.) Akademiai Kiado: Budapest. 1977.

This book, although published in Hungary, is the formal transcription of a symposium on the cerebral circulation held in Tbilisi in Georgia in 1974. It is of particular interest in that, of the 44 named participants, only five came from Western countries, the remainder being either from the USSR or from Eastern Europe. The book is, therefore, of considerable interest as offering an insight into the active research which continues in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Poland into problems of the cerebral circulation, which is far from widely known in Western countries. Many widely respected authors from Eastern countries took part, Pasztor and his associates from the Institute of Neurosurgery in Budapest,

Kandel, Gannushkina, and Konovalova from Moscow, Moskalenko from Leningrad, and Mchedlishvili himself from Tbilisi, being names well known to research workers in the West. The interest of these contributions, therefore, to some extent compensates for the fact that the book is now somewhat out-of-date, having been overtaken by publications of more recent symposia on cerebral circulation, but it is probable that departments to whom this represents a major research effort will wish to add this book to their library for completeness of reference if nothing else.

The coverage of subjects is as one might expect in an international symposium, and papers on neurogenic control, autoregulation, brain amines, and brain oedema are well represented. The rapportage of the discussion is of interest to aficionados of the circulation and the book as a whole is neatly and compactly produced.

LINDSAY SYMONDS

Multiple Sclerosis—Scars of Childhood By John M. Adams. (Pp. 71; illustrated; \$8.75.) Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, Illinois. 1977.

The object of this book is to report to patients and their relatives the recent advances in research in multiple sclerosis and possible lines of treatment. The author is a distinguished paediatrician with a great interest in the infectious fevers of childhood. He and Imagawa were the first to find a slight but significant increase in measles antibodies in the sera of patients suffering from multiple sclerosis. Since then a considerable amount of research has confirmed their findings but the part that measles virus plays in the disease process is not yet clear.

The book is well and clearly written and should be of great interest to intelligent patients, their relatives, nurses, physiotherapists, and anyone interested in multiple sclerosis. There is a very useful glossary and explanation of terms for patients.

J. H. D. MILLAR