Book reviews

Neural Regulation of the Heart Edited by W. C. Randall. (Pp. 440; illustrated; £13.50.) Oxford Medical Publications, Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1977.

Knowledge of the nervous control of the heart has developed greatly in the last 15 years, and this book is planned to bring together the findings. The book describes the sympathetic and parasympathetic control of the heart, the reflexes from the chest and from the heart itself which affect the heart, the mechanisms in the brain and spinal cord which mediate these reflexes, and the consequences for cardiac function of denervation as in transplantation. Chapters begin with a succinct historical review, and the editor has kept an excellent balance. The book fills its role well. It is largely concerned with animals, but brings out the clinical relevance of findings and concludes with a chapter on the neural effects on the ECG and heart rhythm.

J. M. K. SPALDING

Advances in Neurology Volume 16 Stroke Edited by R. A. Thompson and J. R. Green. (Pp. 237; illustrated; \$24.00.) Raven Press: New York. 1977.

The contributors to this volume are clearly actively engaged in the management of strokes for, while their reviews of the status of scientific knowledge are thorough and up-to-date, their appraisal of the knowledge is very much orientated to the clinical situation. This is well exemplified in the chapter on platelets in relation to stroke. This provides an excellent survey of current knowledge but, referring to trials of antiplatelet agents in TIAs, declares, 'If neither of these trials gives an unequivocal result, we may be involved for a long time in evaluating their empirical but unproven use'. In the chapter on the management of TIAs the author makes it clear that the former passion for visualising all possible vessels was misdirected and unrewarding. An eclectic approach, which usually involves visualisation of both carotid systems with selective

display of other vessels when there are special indications, is advocated—a policy with which the present reviewer would very much agree.

The operation of anastomosing the superficial temporal artery to a branch of the middle cerebral pioneered by Yasargil has often been described as 'an operation looking for an indication'. Sound indications are provided here: middle cerebral stenosis; inaccessible internal carotid or middle cerebral occlusion with inadequate collaterals as shown by the fact that the patient continues with intermittent ischaemic attacks after the occlusion; and the management of some giant aneurysms.

Anyone concerned with the management of strokes—which means most physicians—will find in this volume a reliable review of current knowledge combined with sound practical advice on management.

JOHN MARSHALL

Stroke: Proceedings of the Ninth Pfizer International Symposium Edited by F. J. Gillingham, C. Mawdsley, and A. E. Williams. (Pp. 541; illustrated; £12.00.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh, London, New York. 1976.

All symposia proceedings have to contend with the inbuilt disadvantage that the need for their very existence can be questioned. Symposia on stroke have the extra handicap that they recur regularly and have to compete with similar symposia held in other places.

The proceedings of the ninth Pfizer Symposium on Stroke has all of these problems but does have the advantage, for British readers at least, that two-thirds of the participants come from the United Kingdom. This gives a somewhat more pertinent feel to some of the papers, particularly in the sections on epidemiology. This is not to deny the importance of some of the transatlantic contributions which, as with some others in the surgical section, give a hint of some significant advances in treatment of aneurysms. The overall message sadly, however, is not very optimistic despite the enthusiasm and hard work

of so many clearly dedicated people. Although it is recognised that stroke in old age may be perhaps more acceptable, the lessons gained from investigating and treating these, even with little dramatic result may eventually lead to some more useful way to combat this unkind wrecker of normal life when it occurs in the younger patient.

ALLAN W. DOWNIE

Cerebrovascular Diseases Tenth Princeton Conference Edited by Peritz Scheinberg. (Pp. 388; illustrated; \$24.00.) Raven Press: New York. 1976.

It is hard to believe that these conferences have attained the dignity of having been held over a period of 22 years. This one concentrates on selected aspects of the problem but even so cannot escape the plethora of facts and figures which make reading and understanding of the message so difficult. The surgical contributions particularly on microsurgical anastomosis offer a more finite topic with a more hopeful therapeutic message. Not a book for bedside reading.

ALLAN W. DOWNIE

The Clinical Neurosciences Volume 2 of The Nervous System Volume Editor Thomas N. Chase, Editor-in-Chief Donald B. Tower. (Pp. 556; illustrated; \$15.00.) Raven Press: New York. 1976. To review the advances in clinical neurology over the 25 years since the formation of the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke without writing a short textbook of neurology is quite a problem since these years have seen the establishment of neurology as an independent clinical discipline, with major advances in many areas. This volume does not succeed quite so well as the first volume, *The Basic Neurosciences*. It may be relevant that the most important advances are in those subjects where biochemistry has been available, as in the lipidoses and other metabolic

disorders, new techniques have been evolved, as in cerebral blood flow studies, or where biopsy and neurophysiology are easy, as in peripheral neuropathy and diseases of muscle. Are the main advances of the future to come from the laboratory? Is it really true that the last thing to be, if you aspire to a Nobel Prize in Medicine, is a practising doctor? It may be so, but there is plenty of good clinical observation here too. The author of page 389 who writes caustically that 'from France, the homeland of Chauvin, have come reports' of a well-known syndrome described eponymously in favour of a French writer, must be rather thoughtful after reading the whole book which concentrates on American contributions even if not the seminal ones. But this is a family celebration of a silver anniversary and they have reason to be proud of it. This is not a textbook of neurology but the publisher's blurb that it is a lure intended to bring new talent into this most exciting and challenging branch of the science should be handsomely fulfilled.

J. A. SIMPSON

Human Communication and its Disorders Volume 3 of The Nervous System Volume Editor Eldon L. Eagles, Editor-in-Chief Donald B. Tower. (Pp. 576; illustrated; \$15.00.) Raven Press: New York. 1976.

The third volume of the series commemorating the 25th anniversary of the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke of the USA is at once the most difficult to review and the most promising for the future. It contains chapters on the mechanisms of hearing which will stretch neurologists and otologists alike but which are essential for the full understanding of the later sections on the central processes of language and on speech. Though the latter still suffers from lack of objectivity, it is quite clear that the necessary knowledge of brain mechanisms essential for language and speech functions is evolving and the interest of neurology is at last turning to the unique functions of the brain as the organ of mind. If research is the art of the possible (well exemplified by the advances in peripheral neurology), the next 25 years is bound to show major

advances in our understanding and perhaps treatment of disorders of communication, the core problem of neurology and psychiatry. This book should encourage young men to enter the lists.

J. A. SIMPSON

Computed Brain and Orbital Tomography: Technique and Interpretation By C. F. Gonzalez, C. B. Grossman, and E. Palacios. (Pp. 276; illustrated; £21.75/\$36.85.) John Wiley and Sons: Chichester. 1977.

The aim of this book is to provide a basic knowledge of the principles, techniques, and interpretation of this new diagnostic method in a small and easily readable volume. It is indeed quite short and with less prodigal use of paper even fewer pages would have been required. It is mainly an atlas of normal and abnormal appearances presented in the horizontal format characteristic of the method but supported by many well-labelled anatomical sections to help those readers unfamiliar with this view of the brain. The authors' claim that the work is based on a combined experience of over 20 000 scans, makes one wonder why, with this extensive material, some of the many empty spaces were not occupied by further examples, or by tables indicating the relative effectiveness of the method in detecting and identifying the various types of lesion. Although a rather costly book for its size it is recommended to those seeking a knowledge of the fundamentals of computed tomography.

J. L. STEVEN

Human Neuroanatomy Seventh Edition By Malcolm B. Carpenter. (Pp. 741; illustrated; \$25.00.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1976.

The seventh edition of this standard textbook is essentially a rearrangement and consolidation of the previous edition to suit teaching programmes but it contains new material on neurotransmitters with a complete revision of the chapter on the autonomic nervous system. The nomenclature adopted by the International Anatomical Nomenclature Committee has been used. A feature of this book has always been the emphasis on 'functional considerations'

with special reference to clinical problems. The excellent atlas of brain and brain stem at the end of the book is now available in slide or filmstrip format.

J. A. SIMPSON

Atlas of the Central Nervous System in Man 2nd Edition By Richard A. Miller and Ethel Burack. (Pp. 63; illustrated; price not stated.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1977.

This atlas is based on part of the course in neuroanatomy taught in the Albany Medical College. It stems from an appreciation of the importance of myelin-stained sections, cut in sagittal and transverse planes, in the proper understanding of the neuroanatomical configuration of the central nervous system.

The first part consists of six representative levels of the spinal cord, and 32 levels of the brain stem cut transversely in the medulla and lower pons with a gradual shift to frontal sections beginning in the rostral pons and progressing into the thalamus and cerebral hemispheres. The second part of the atlas consists of a midsagittal and 20 selected parasagittal sections. Structures are identified by code numbers based upon the sagittal sections with many cross references to the transverse sections, thereby facilitating the three-dimensional relationships of fibre tracts and nuclei. For the most part the nomenclature of the Paris revision of the Basle Nomina Anatomica has been used. Each figure is accompanied by notes which develop the important concept of structure and function with reference to the neuroanatomical basis of the more common neurological disorders. In addition to an alphabetical index, anatomical structures are also indexed in the numerical order of their code numbers.

Unfortunately this book fails to achieve excellence in its primary function as an atlas of the central nervous system for at least 12 of the transverse and two of the sagittal figures are either not in focus or are of poor quality. Some of the figures are also marred by substandard artwork. Furthermore, as a clinical neuropathologist used to screening large cel-
luloid sections of the cerebral and