

Book reviews

Neurology for the House Officer
Second edition By H. L. Weiner and
L. P. Levitt. (Pp. 180; illustrated; \$9.95.)
Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1978.

How to Examine the Nervous System
By R. T. Ross. (Pp. 124; illustrated;
\$6.50.) Charles C. Thomas: Springfield,
Illinois. 1978.

In most British medical schools the teaching of neurology is appalling if not actually clinically negligent, and the reviewer speaks from experience of training (?) in one famous London undergraduate teaching hospital, with postgraduate experience in two others and in a new regional school. Discussion with colleagues only confirms this personal experience. Why should this be so? Neurological teachers, with few exceptions, have no shortage of wit, kindness, and enthusiasm, and they usually have an abundance of eccentricities to endear them to their pupils. Postgraduate neurological training is of a high quality in most parts of the country. The answer probably lies in the fact that in too many schools the exposure of undergraduates to neurological teaching by *neurologists* is minimal, and most of the neurology is taught by general physicians and their registrars. I would have great sympathy for a medical student who was taught cardiology or renal medicine by a neurologist and the converse is surely true, and the effect can be witnessed every day in the wards of hospitals, in the standard of referral to outpatients, and in the cost of expensive neurological investigations ordered indiscriminately, and sometimes dangerously.

Any means of rectifying this situation are welcome, and for this reason these two short books are recommended. *Neurology for the House Officer* is in its second edition. It is based on the lecture notes compiled by the authors when senior residents engaged in teaching students. It is for the most part practical and helpful. The index is inadequate, and there are some very poor sections (try looking up the cause of a third nerve palsy and how to investigate the patient), but the book is useful, and will improve the way in which junior staff and others practice neurology which is what it sets out to do.

How to Examine the Nervous System is a simple book which again can only serve to improve clinical neurological skills.

There are better books available covering the fields represented here but nevertheless I would recommend that these two be carried in every junior staff white coat pocket.

L. S. ILLIS

Human Health and Disease Edited by Philip L. Altman and Dorothy D. Katz. (Pp. 435; illustrated; £28.00.) Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology: Bethesda, Maryland. John Wiley: London. 1978.

The general concept of this series of Biological Handbooks is good, being an attempt to provide quantitative data on clinical medicine, excluding treatment. It is reasonably successful for metabolic problems but it is difficult to imagine a practical use for the material tabulated in the section on Neurologic Diseases except as a source of references—not necessarily the best, but at least an entry to appropriate literature (if you already know the diagnosis). The increasingly quantitative treatment of electromyography is not included, and CSF abnormalities are difficult to trace. Otherwise I find it difficult to think of suitable items for inclusion. Perhaps the neurologist has to rely more on "soft data" than most other specialists. He will unfortunately find little to help him here.

J. A. SIMPSON

Atlas of the Human Brain Third edition By D. H. Ford, J. Illari, and J. P. Schade. (Pp. x+294; illustrated; \$19.95, Dfl. 46.00.) Elsevier/North-Holland: Amsterdam. 1978.

When I reviewed the second edition of this atlas in these columns in 1971, I was impressed by it and commented on the high standard of the illustrations. Unfortunately the same standard has not been achieved in this "new and revised" edition, and the atlas inevitably suffers as a result. Nonetheless it remains a useful and concise account of

the anatomy of the brain, and I am pleased to note that the authors have on this occasion adopted the anglicised version of the *Nomina Anatomica*. Additions include a few angiograms which are also not of particularly high quality and a section on pathological correlations with anatomy. This might be of some interest to the anatomist but will appear very superficial to the pathologist or the neurologist—it is however, interesting to note that thrombosis of the posterior cerebral artery may produce an infarct in the dorsal lateral quadrant of the medulla! There is also a chapter on computerised tomography: this does not incorporate any scans but it does illustrate sections of the brain in planes comparable to those scanned in computerised topography. I shall probably find these illustrations of some use, but in other respects I preferred the previous edition.

HUME ADAM

Atlas of Carotid Angiography Edited by M. Takahashi. (Pp. 525; illustrated; Dutch guilders 236.) Igaku Shoin: Tokyo. 1977.

This is an excellent atlas. Nearly 500 reproductions of X-rays, all subtraction, provide a clear picture of all aspects of carotid angiography. Angiographic techniques are briefly but adequately described, and the detailed illustrated account of the angiographic anatomy of the arterial and venous systems is superbly done.

Only a quarter of the book is devoted to neoplasms with roughly the same space allocated to aneurysms, arteriovenous fistulae, and vascular occlusive disease. The book, therefore, provides a valuable complement to the results of computer assisted tomography in the definition of intracranial lesions.

Every department concerned with the training and practice of neuro-radiology will need to make this reference book available to all levels of staff. The author expresses the hope that this volume will be "received as well as his previous work on vertebral angiography." In view of its quality there can be little doubt on this score.

E. C. HUTCHINGS