

Book reviews

Dysmorphies cranio-faciales. Les synostoses prématures (craniostenoses et faciostenoses) By J. Montaut and M. Stricker. (Pp. 300; illustrated; price not stated.) Masson: Paris. 1977.

The close relationship which exists between craniosynostosis and the congenital facial abnormalities is now widely recognised, and has, of necessity, thrown the neurosurgeon and the plastic surgeon together in an effort to deal adequately with these complicated and often tragic problems. The French have for many years led the world in the surgical management of such disorders, and it is appropriate that this very timely monograph should come from that country.

After a brief historical introduction and résumé of craniofacial embryology, the authors classify and describe the relationships between the various craniofacial dysostoses and the secondary complications which may occur. The latter part of the book is taken up with the physical and radiological investigations used in these patients and the various surgical manoeuvres to correct the deformities described, with the authors' individual contributions in this field.

As one would expect from the French school, the chapters on description and classification are excellent and these, together with the section on the neurological and intellectual complications occurring as a result of the abnormalities, are in many ways the most valuable. Surgeons involved in this field will have read of the authors' techniques in the specialist journals, and it is doubtful if the section on surgical treatment is of much practical value to the operating surgeon. In so far as it stresses the intimate relationship between the skull vault deformities and the facial deformities it will be of considerable help in persuading those neurosurgeons and paediatric surgeons who treat only the vault that in many patients this is dealing with only a part of the overall problem.

Because of its logical layout and full illustration this book is not difficult to read even for those with a minimal working knowledge of the French

language. It can be recommended to all interested in the expanding field of craniofacial surgery. In view of its well-selected bibliography, it will be of particular value in the English speaking countries where much valuable basic and practical work in European language journals is not always readily available.

T. A. H. HIDE

The Purposive Brain By Ragnar Granit. (Pp. 244; illustrated; £8.75.) MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass. and London. 1977.

In its arresting title, Professor Granit's new book proclaims his philosophy that teleological explanations, far from being disparaged, should be encouraged in biological research, for observations only become integrated when their purpose is apparent or supposed. Writing for the reader with some knowledge of biology but without specialised knowledge of neurophysiology, the author draws on his life's work on the physiology of vision and the control of motor activity to illustrate the general principles of the input and output systems of the brain, with the marvelous lability of response made possible by the encephalisation of functions done more peripherally in primitive animals, but unless the output be "goal-directed" the greater adaptability is of little significance. Granit's philosophy is emphasised in three statements: (1) from simultaneously available information the purposive brain selects what it finds biologically useful; (2) in this way it employs its billions of neurones to create unique cellular organs of high specificity combining information from various sources with action; (3) such organs are mobilised by injecting into them components that we describe in such psychological terms as motivation, interest, anger, demand, or accomplishment—in short, relevance for some biological purpose.

The general reader may find some of the factual material more difficult than the author appreciates (and misuse of "cue" where "clue" is intended causes temporary confusion) but the general message comes over clearly, and

follows Sherrington and Eccles into the realms of higher cerebral functions and consciousness. Pity it is that the experimental insights of great physiologists are not applied to these problems at the height of their powers.

J. A. SIMPSON

Cerebral Vascular Disease Edited by J. S. Meyer, H. Lechner, and M. Reivich. (Pp. 28; illustrated; \$54.50, Dfl. 133.00.) Excerpta Medica: Amsterdam. 1977.

The appearance of the Proceedings of the Eighth Salzburg Conference is proof either of continuing interest in cerebrovascular disease or of eternal optimism on the part of the publishing business. The organisers of the 1976 conference have turned aside from the previous preoccupation with the pathogenesis of cerebrovascular disease and have boldly embarked on a new course: the role of the cerebral circulation in dementia. It is unfortunate, though perhaps inevitable, that the care and precision expended by numerous investigators on measurement of cerebral blood flow (CBF) has seldom been matched in the clinical examination of patients. Other recurring faults concern the selection of "normal controls" either for blood flow or intellectual function, and the comparability of repeated measurements in the same patient. It seems that the present CBF techniques may not be appropriate for detecting the rapid functional changes which occur during neurophysiological testing.

Nevertheless the distinction which emerges on both circulatory and pathological grounds between primary neuronal and secondary arteriopathic dementia (now curiously renamed "multi-infarct dementia") is of great importance when considering both the management of patients and the direction of future research.

The remainder of the conference deals with a great variety of cerebrovascular topics, some clinical and some methodological. The great European tradition of neuropathology appears to be in abeyance. The proceedings of the conference have been produced by a

photocopying process which is commendably speedy but also provokes migraine in susceptible readers. The conference language was English—the editors were not!

R. W. ROSS RUSSELL

Pathology of Peripheral Nerves By R. O. Weller and J. Cervós-Navarro. (Pp. 225; illustrated; £13.50.) Butterworths: London and Boston. 1977.

This book attempts to fill a loophole between the works on neuropathology and muscle pathology, and deals, in the middle third of its 214 pages, with general pathology of peripheral nerve and the pathology of peripheral nerve diseases. This has been no easy task for it is difficult to think of the nerves in disease without considering their cell bodies, synapses, and specialised endings. Where necessary, brief references are made to these matters while concentrating on the results of biopsy or necropsy studies of nerves. The technique of sural nerve biopsy and the ruinous consequences of inept handling are described. The laboratory work is not dealt with in detail but each technique is covered by references to original descriptions or standard laboratory technical books.

For the majority of those who would be attracted by the title of this book the technical section may seem unrewarding and the final third of the book, devoted to descriptions of tumour pathology which are available elsewhere, may seem unbalanced.

This volume is highly priced for what it yields, but it will probably be welcomed by laboratories with neurological interests because it brings together many references to widely scattered old and very new work on axonal injury, regeneration, "dying-back", myelination, dysmyelination nodes and internodes, and Schwann cell biology.

DAVID DOYLE

Multiple Sclerosis—A Critical Conspectus Edited by E. J. Field. (Pp. 265; illustrated; £9.95.) MTP Press: Lancaster. 1977.

The stated purpose of this small, multi-authored book is to highlight "the shortcomings of our approaches" to the study of multiple sclerosis, to help the general physician understand why

neurologists have failed to solve the problem, and to direct the attention of young neurobiologists towards this illness. Unfortunately, our ignorance of multiple sclerosis is still all too apparent and, with so many excellent monographs and publications on the subject available, I cannot see why this book was produced. Most of the experimental virological and immunological data given are highly controversial and would not be accepted by the majority of established workers in the field. I find the clinical account poor, since it adds nothing and tends towards the anecdotal. The research worker will not require this book, the clinician unaware of the existing controversies will be confused by it, and the novice will be misled. I cannot recommend it.

PETER O. BEHAN

Remembering Henry Edited by Stephen Lock and Heather Windle. (Pp. 166; £3.00.) British Medical Association: London. 1977.

THE GREAT CHAM
Portrait painters as opposed to mere photographers inevitably incorporate into their works the fundamental features of their own personalities. Most Johnsonians discern in Boswell's "Life" of his great master all the elements of the writer's own character. This present collection of written portraits, engagingly assembled by Stephen Lock and Heather Windle, has produced a distillate, at once fascinating and charming, of the subtle emotional and intellectual forces at work between the subject and the authors. It is truly a homely *Festschrift* (how Henry himself would have castigated that turgid term!), for this splendid volume, dedicated to the memory of a remarkable ornament of the neurological and academic scene, recalls vividly to those who knew him, and evokes for those whose misfortune was not to have done so, all the charisma of a unique personality. The enterprise, whether by design or happy accident, succeeds beyond expectation, for each contribution springs from the special relationship established between each of the writers and their mutual subject, and so creates a true hologrammatic image of a man whom they (and we) knew and cherished. The contributions range from the austere, and not always uncritical, appreciation through personal devotion

and at times justifiable frank idolatry. It would be invidious to select any particular section for special mention. Suffice it to say that all are eminently readable and occasionally quite uproarious.

The three final sections of the monograph are selections from Henry's own writing—his account of accident neurosis, his essay on medical education or titled "Fifty years after Flexner", and finally that devastating broadside fire in response to what one can only assume to be a wilful masochistic invitation to the World Psychiatric Symposium of 1969 and entitled "Psychiatry—medicine or magic?"

If you have not already bought this book, send a minion out at once to collect it. It will please you too.

L. A. LIVERSEY

Notices

An International Symposium on Peripheral Neuropathies will be held in Milan, Italy from 26 to 28 June 1978. Enquiries should be addressed to the Secretariat, Symposium on Peripheral Neuropathies, Ospedale S. Raffaele, 20090 Segrate (Milan) Italy. Telephone 02-2134041.

On the occasion of the 50 year Jubilee of Aarhus University a **Symposium on Nervous System Abnormalities and Nervous Diseases in Diabetes Mellitus** will be held from 31 August to 1 September 1978. A limited number of short free communications will be accepted. For further information please write to Professor K. Lundbæk, 2nd University Clinic of Internal Medicine, Kommunehospitalet, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark.

The 4th International Symposium on Microsurgical Anastomoses for Cerebral Ischemia will be held in London Ontario from 6 to 8 September 1978. Neurosurgeons and other neuroscientists interested in the problems of cerebral ischemia and revascularisation of the brain are invited to participate. For information please write to S. J. Pettigrew, MD, FRCS(C), Division of Neurosurgery, University Hospital, Box 5339 Terminal "A", London, Ontario, N6A 5A5 Canada.