isms, reflecting the author's long-standing interest in experimental neuropathies. The original, concise chapter on skeletal muscles by Daniel and Sabina Stritch has been revised by Harriman who added recently described affictions and informative pictures of muscle histochemistry.

The new edition is more comprehensive in content (an extra 100 pages) and more up-to-date in concept than its predecessor: results obtained by electron microscopy, tissue culture, histochemistry, immunology and virology occasionally complement the more traditional morphology. One only wished that these modern investigations had been incorporated more frequently and discussed at greater length. Economy with space, however, resulted in the omission of repetitive reviews of case reports, thus bringing many disorders into sharper focus. The illustrations are of good quality; they may not always be outstanding but are seldom disappointing. The reference lists bear witness to long gestation: only a few works quoted were published later than 1970.

These three chapters on neuropathology are recommended not only for pathologists but for everyone who is interested in the diseased nervous system. This book makes rewarding reading.

PL LANTOS


Tredgold's Mental Deficiency first appeared in 1908 and for many years had the distinction of being the definitive British text on the subject. In spite of its scholarly nature and combination of wisdom and good sense, its reputation suffered and, with changes in attitudes and despair over the services provided in some hospitals for the mentally handicapped, it had come, somewhat unjustly, to epitomise an outdated "medical" model of care identified with institutionalisation.

The publishers and the new editor have retained the marque but taken the courageous step of almost completely remodelling this multi-author work.

Encouraging outward signs are the use of the term "Mental Retardation" in the title, suggesting that clinicians in this country may be falling in with the internationally accepted nomenclature. The presentation of the volume and distinguished multidisciplinary panel of contributors, all of whom are new (with the notable exception of the author of the chapter on epilepsy) increases the confidence of the reader.

Does the text meet up to these expectations? The answer must be a qualified assurance that this volume will retain its place as one of the two standard text books on the topic in this country.

The clinical section is of particular value in providing an up to date source of reference on the biological courses of mental retardation. It is to be hoped that further editions will demonstrate a response to the editor's request for improved illustrations and that some of the undoubted profits will be used to introduce colour into those illustrating the commoner and more important clinical signs.

The sections on psychiatry and medication are disappointing in neglecting recent research on this topic, as it relates particularly to mental handicap and, generally speaking, the reader would do as well to consult a standard text on psychiatry. The sections on psychology and social work are welcome additions, although those on social work and residential care are of limited and rather parochial value. Throughout the volume the very limited and selected list of references means that the book will be of little value to the research worker except as an introduction to the multidisciplinary nature of the field.

The contribution on the law is of particular interest and, while justifiably critical of the present state of legislation, and the author seems to miss the point that the relatively small number of applications under Sections 29 or 26 to mental hospitals are not because of mental retardation alone but superadded psychiatric illness. The author of this section hints at changes in legislation to protect the rights of the mentally retarded, and hopefully the next edition will include constructive suggestions. Like many multi-author works the rag bag section of chapters covering specialised areas are of varied usefulness. The chapter on "Autism" takes a somewhat idiosyncratic view of the topic, neglecting much contemporary research, and would have been better included under the section on psychiatry, where the other important links between child psychiatry and mental handicap tend to be neglected. The distinguished contribution on epilepsy clearly points to the need for further research into the neurophysiological aspects of this common secondary handicap in the mentally retarded and would have been better included in an extended section on the neurological aspects of the problem.

These criticisms apart, this new text book is to be welcomed as a major and much needed contribution to the professional care of the mentally handicapped, and of value to students and practitioners alike.

JA CORBETT


This book from the Epilepsy Branch, National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland is an extensive review of the current knowledge on photosensitivity. This is defined as "an abnormal electroencephalographic or clinical response to light" and does not include other forms of photosensitivity such as the dermatological ones. Although the authors claim to have avoided "the use of EEG terms in describing clinical phenomena and vice versa" they have not completely succeeded, for example in the use of the term "photo-convulsive response." The large bibliography quoted is very helpful but little is said about discrepancies in the techniques employed by various authors with considerable diversity of results. A minor portion of Grey-Walter's work has been quoted and, in addition, there is no mention of the large amplitude discharges in the EEG in response to single flashes of light in patients with Biebschowsky-Janski's disease. In many EEG laboratories anticonvulsant treatment is suspended for 1-2 days prior to the EEG: this is one of the most common causes of abnormal responses to photic stimulation in many centres, and this aspect is not discussed. The chapter on animal models of photosen-