

which has an extensive series of excellent, almost full-page, muscle biopsy illustrations. Some of these are, however, out of context; for example, the section on mitochondrial myopathies says that mitochondrial-lipid-glycogen myopathy is the only mitochondrial myopathy with neonatal onset but the illustration does not show this condition but a fairly normal looking mature muscle (presumably from an older child or adult) with two abnormal fibres suggesting mitochondrial abnormality. In none of the histological illustrations is any detail given of the cases from which they came. The succeeding chapters review important topics—asphyxia, trauma and vascular anomalies, infections, metabolic disorders, disorders of cerebral morphogenesis, hydrocephalus and congenital tumours, and finally neonatal electroencephalography. In keeping with the times, there is a liberal supply of CT scans, many of which show up interesting aspects of pathology. I was puzzled by the use of a CT scan (fig 5.2) in a case with a parietal cephal-haematoma which revealed “an extracranial mass which does not cross the suture lines.” I would have thought one’s fingers were perfectly reliable for diagnosing that.

The book covers many of the metabolic disorders affecting the nervous system, together with several useful charts of the appropriate metabolic cycles, and having recently seen a floppy convulsing neonate with Zellweger’s syndrome I thought I might get an update on the role of pipercolic acid but there was no mention of it at all and none of the references included were beyond 1970. I am afraid this book will not meet the need for either a practical basic book on neonatal neurology for the greenhorn or a source of reference and authority for the experienced neonatologist.

V DUBOWITZ

**Practical Electromyography** Edited by Ernest W Johnson (pp 457; £21) Baltimore, London: Williams and Wilkins, 1980.

After years of drought, as far as EMG textbooks are concerned, there is a flood. Lenman and Ritchie, Goodgold and Eberstein, Smorto and Masmajian, Aminoff—to mention only some current English language texts—are now joined by the latest volume in the Rehabilitation Medicine Library. It has evolved from Sidney Licht’s well-known “Electromyography and Electrodiagnosis” under the hand of Ernest W Johnson, but is in effect a new book by, and one feels mainly for, American “physiatrists.” Two questions immediately arise: does it provide anything not already available and is there a need for EMG textbooks anyway? To the first question the answer is surely no, and to the second this reviewer would reply: yes, but preferably not of this kind. EMG techniques are essentially simple and learned by apprenticeship, so that the really useful book will be problem-orientated, like Matthews’ invaluable “Practical Neurology,” and have chapter headings like “The Wasted Hand” and “The Aching Middle-Aged Woman” rather than the seemingly inevitable, and terribly fatiguing “Myopathies”, Radiculopathies” and so on.

The first chapter, of which the editor is co-author, is unfortunate, to say the least. What, for example, is one to make of the recommendation, on the very first page, to give the patient “a poke in the abdomen” to obtain relaxation of paraspinal muscles? Or of the instruction to make “circular individual movements of the electrode . . . at least 12 and probably 20 times” at each site of needle insertion? It is tempting to proceed no further, in the face of poor illustrations and loose, often hideous writing (“ . . . pathological muscle cell membrane irritability is on a continuum rather than a dichotomous process . . .”), but the temptation should be resisted because there are competent and interesting chapters on motor conduction, repetitive stimulation, myopathies, anterior horn cell diseases, polyneuropathies and entrapment syndromes. A particularly helpful contribution is that of Reiner and Rogoff on instrumentation, since few electro-

myographers are sufficiently acquainted with the technical basis of their craft.

There is the usual irritating evidence of lax proof-reading (“Thomson disease,” “medical cord of the plexus”), but two more serious general criticisms need to be made. The first is of a tendency on the part of nearly all contributors to dilate upon interesting, important, often speculative aspects of the subject at the expense of truly practical information, thus belying the title. The second is the failure to appreciate that single fibre EMG has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of the findings of orthodox EMG. All future authors of EMG textbooks are recommended to read “Single fibre electromyography” by Stålberg and Trontelj before lifting their pens.

J PAYAN

**Atlas of the Human Brain and the Orbit for Computed Tomography** By J Hanway, WR Scott, CM Strohger (pp 76; \$32.50) St Louis Missouri: Warren H Green, 1980.

This is the 2nd edition of an atlas consisting of brain sections approximately 8 mm thick with corresponding scans at 0 degrees, 25 degrees and 45 degrees to Reid’s base line. Since the first edition all the scans except three have been changed and have now been taken on a GE8800 scanner. The pictures of the scans and brain sections accompanied by the corresponding sagittal reference plane are of good quality and well labelled. The supratentorial sections have been well chosen and accurately reflect the cadaver sections. At the level of the tentorium, however, the authors have had some difficulty obtaining corresponding CT and cadaver sections. It is important to be aware of the angle of scan to Reid’s base line as this alters the position of a lesion in the image. This book will be of considerable value to those embarking on a career in the neurological sciences, as well as, to radiologists with some exposure to neuroradiology.

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