

cations subsequently proposed by Gardner-Medwin and Walton in 1974.

The clinical section contains a useful review of the annual incidence of various neuropathies in different countries. In general, however, this section lacks balance and certain subjects receive disproportionate emphasis at the expense of others. For example, several pages are devoted to rare inherited conditions such as abetalipoproteinaemia, Fabry's syndrome and Refsum's disease, whereas clinical aspects of common neuropathies (Guillain-Barré syndrome, leprosy) receive cursory treatment. (There is, for example, no mention of thickened nerves in the clinical account of neural leprosy.) The few pages devoted to mechanical and traumatic nerve lesions do not do justice to the subject; if more detailed treatment was not possible, it might have been wiser to have omitted this section.

RW GILLIATT

Neuropsychiatric Features of Medical Disorders. By James W Jefferson and John R Marshall. (Pp 383; £24.50.) London: Plenum Medical Book Company, 1981.

Liaison psychiatry was the vogue speciality of the sixties and seventies, displacing psychosomatic medicine, a discredited hybrid with a penchant for facile theorising that betrayed all too clearly its origins in psychoanalytical dogma. The earliest tests displayed all of the wide eyed enthusiasm of the freshly converted. The contribution that psychiatrists might make to medicine was explored with an almost Messianic zeal. Recent publications strike a more cautionary note. There is an awareness that a conventional psychiatric training (and this is particularly true of the United States) may leave the specialist ill-equipped to deal with the technicalities of general medicine. This concern is evident throughout this book. The authors, who are both psychiatrists with extensive general hospital experience, state their aims clearly in the preface: to acquaint their readers more fully with the neuropsychiatric aspects of physical illness and medical drugs. It is important to be clear what the book is not about. It does not concern itself with neuropsychiatric symptoms that are manifestations of primary brain disease or dysfunction; nor with the neurological side effects of psychotropic drugs. Stress-related somatic syndromes of a functional nature such as spastic colon receive no

more attention than is necessary to gage the importance of their contribution to the differential diagnosis of authentic organic disorders. Such self-imposed restrictions seem entirely reasonable: these areas have already been covered by standard and highly acclaimed text books. How well does the book succeed? One major difficulty is that it is not easy to describe the neuropsychiatric symptoms of a disorder without first summarising the condition itself. As a consequence it reads rather like a potted version of an undergraduate medical text book. Another problem is the ubiquitous but somewhat unvarying nature of psychiatric symptoms as they accompany physical disease. Anxiety, irritability and fatigue make their appearance page after page and have relatively little specific diagnostic value. This cannot be helped but hardly makes for easy reading. The allocation of space is at times rather arbitrary. If there is any overriding principle it often seems that the more obscure the subject the more attention it gets. Thus disorders associated with disturbed magnesium metabolism get five pages, organophosphate poisoning four. In contrast alcohol related problems are accounted for in four pages and thiamine deficiency in three. Coverage is often variable. Male erectile impotence is dealt with in detail, ejaculatory impotence barely mentioned and female sexual dysfunction ignored completely. Many somatic syndromes of probable psychogenic origin, for example, low back pain chronic prostatism, receive no mention.

These criticisms notwithstanding it remains a useful reference book and any well endowed Department of Psychiatry with a foothold in a general hospital would do well to have it on its library shelves. Sections on endocrine disorder, fluid-electrolyte disturbance, vitamin disorders and toxins are particularly thorough. At £24.50p it cannot, however, be regarded as value for money for the individual buyer.

BRIAN TOONE

Depression. The Facts. By George Winokur. (Pp 166; £5.95.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

This book is mainly written for sufferers from depression and for their relatives but is also addressed to nurses, social workers, ministers of religion, and other professional workers who are likely to meet people suffering from depression.

To deal satisfactorily with a topic for such a wide and diverse readership is a difficult task for anyone to undertake.

The book deals with many aspects of depression but stresses the biological factors and approaches to treatment, dealing with some of them at length and in detail. For the lay reader the rather hasty dismissal of unhappiness as a matter unrelated to the real subject-matter of the book, "depression . . . a clinical state often requiring intervention", will be surprising and not entirely comprehensible. The lay reader's problem in comprehension will be compounded by the detailed chapter on classification of the major disorders. The treatment of some topics is in such detail it will be of value to postgraduate students of psychiatry but other important and relevant topics are dealt with scantily and others omitted. Here lie the main weaknesses of the book; it is too idiosyncratic in its opinions to be so dogmatic; the level at which topics are considered is very variable; and little advice is given on the management of the more common types of unhappiness including bereavement. Style in writing is a matter of preference but for me the author's rather confident, racy style is unsuitable for the material he presents.

This book is disappointing, and has suffered in being prepared for too wide a readership; it is not successful in satisfactorily meeting the needs of any particular group. I hope the author will try again as his experience and distinguished research in the field make him eminently suitable to be the author of an authoritative book on depressive disorders for a lay readership.

RHS MINDHAM

Peptides of the pars intermedia. Ciba Foundation Symposium 81. (Pp 300; £19.50.) London: Pitman Medical, 1981.

This is the published account of a Ciba Symposium on the intermediate lobe of pituitary held in June 1980 under the chairmanship of Michael Besser. It is an outstandingly good review of the structure, chemistry and physiologic functions of this mysterious part of the endocrine system. Changes in colour have always been of major interest in biology. The role of the pituitary gland in endocrinology was first indicated not by a study of growth but by the independent observation of Smith and Allen in 1916 that

tadpoles lost their colour after removal of the pituitary. Chemistry was brought to the anterior pituitary in the 1930's but it was not until 1954 that Lerner showed that the intermediate lobe was involved in pigmentation of humans followed by the extraction and later the synthesis of two melanocyte stimulating hormones, α and β MSH from porcine pituitary glands. Subsequently a peptide precursor of ACTH and lipotropic peptide hormone, LPH, which contains the sequences of endorphins and methionine enkephalin were isolated. The latest triumph has been the preparation of sufficient messenger RNA encoding for ACTH- β LPH to prepare complementary DNA for cloning. All these developments are described accurately in this book with a wealth of detail although the biological role of intermediate lobe peptides remains in doubt. There are major differences between pre-natal and post-natal endocrinology and the pars intermedia is not present in the adult human pituitary. This book will be of considerable interest to biologists and endocrinologists as well as neurologists concerned with the spectacular increase in knowledge gained in the last five years of the structure, location and function of pituitary peptides.

JD PARKES

Cerebral Hemodynamics in Man and Monkey. By Byron M Bloor. (Pp 130; \$19.75.) Illinois: Charles C Thomas. 1981.

The clinical consequences of disruption of the blood supply to the brain remain severe. One approaches a volume which deals with cerebral haemodynamics with particular relevance to subarachnoid haemorrhage and raised intracranial pressure, with the hope of gaining some fresh insight into the mechanisms which are responsible for the clinical problems. The present volume is not an attempt at scholarly review of the subject but rather presents the analysis of considerable data on cerebral haemodynamics in man and monkey derived by the author himself, over more than two decades. The major limitations of the monograph may be traced directly to this. Much of the material which is described in the book is previously unpublished and consequently has not been subjected to peer review. The text provides a highly personal view of what are the major determinants of

the level of blood flow in the brain. The perspective which is presented is somewhat dated (the bibliography contains, for example, only six literature citations from the past five years) and many of the advances which have been made over the last decade find no place in this monograph.

The volume is organised on conventional lines. The first two chapters are devoted to a general introduction to principals of the measurement technique (indicator dilution) and to a simple review of the relationship of intracranial pressure to volume and flow. A brief description of the preparation of the experimental animal and practical details of the methodology follow but these seem insufficient not only because of the unpublished nature of the data but also in view of the incorrect reference cited as providing further details. A systematic presentation of the data investigations in primates (dealing with intracranial pressure—blood flow relationships with induced changes in perfusion and arterial blood gas tensions) forms the heart of the book and contains little which would arouse major controversy among investigators in this field. The brief 3½ page chapter devoted to the effects of cervical sympathetic stimulation in which the author's observations provide little illumination, is particularly inadequate because of its failure to direct the reader to work of various investigators over the last 5 years who have provided a clearer appreciation of the role played by the sympathetic nerve fibres which innervate cerebral vessels. The remainder of the book deals with haemodynamic considerations in cerebrovascular disease in humans with particular emphasis on carotid obstruction and subarachnoid haemorrhage. While the presentation of the material from patients possesses considerable merit, as a consequence of its systematic nature and from the consistency which results from being drawn from the work of a single laboratory, discussion of the relevance of the findings in greater depths would have been beneficial in many areas, particularly the limited pharmacological review of the agents putatively responsible for the vasospasm. The principal value of this book lies, for those approaching this field of research for the first time, precisely in what it purports to be. It is the review of the author's personal experience in basic and applied cerebrovascular research and as such, emphasises the need

for rigorous systematic investigation of the subject and of the difficulties to be faced in making even small advances in our understanding of cerebrovascular disorders.

JAMES MCCULLOCH

Antiepileptic Drugs. Edited by GH Glaser, JK Penry, DM Woodbury. (Pp 728 + xx; \$93.84.) New York: Raven Press. 1980.

This volume flies under the colours of the Raven Press Advances in Neurology series but in its monumental format and equally monumental process of gestation it belongs to a distinguished line of volumes on epilepsy sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke. Unfortunately, in important respects it falls short of its predecessors.

The volume begins well, reviewing aspects of neurobiology relevant to epilepsy, including the cytology of the cortex and hippocampus (Peters and Scheibel), and ionic movements and synaptic physiology (Lux and Krnjević). Relatively short chapters discuss the glial and neuronal physiology of epilepsy (Sonnjen, Crill and McNamara). Three imaginative chapters on structure activity relationships, are followed by what is ironically the best chapter in the book, surveying the mechanisms of action of convulsant drugs (Woodbury).

The 400 pages devoted to anti-convulsant drugs are disappointing. Twelve chapters concern phenytoin, eight the barbiturates, and one each, carbamazepine, the oxazolidinediones, the succinimides, the benzodiazepines, the carbonic anhydrase inhibitors, the ketogenic diet and sodium valproate. This lack of balance is compounded by a less than optimal selection of contributors. Some of the chapters on phenytoin and barbiturates present a few fragmentary observations adrift in a sea of speculations.

To a certain extent the unsatisfactory nature of the chapters on the mechanism of action of anticonvulsants reflects the present state of our knowledge. However, this does not excuse the failure of the chapters on barbiturates and benzodiazepines to discuss the evidence that these compounds enhance GABA-ergic inhibition. This failure is not adequately compensated by the final 'speculative' synthesis by Eugene 'Roberts.