

of human behaviour. At least in the world of Parkinson's disease these distinguished men usually travel alone, being invited personally to meetings in order to raise the level of debate, and cast a few of their perceptive crumbs on the multitude. What was exceptional about Venice in 1983 was that a small international meeting was arranged which consisted solely of eminent motor physiologists and clinical neurologists fluent in physiology, the purpose of which was to discuss what is known about the functional abnormalities of Parkinson's disease; this book remains as a souvenir volume of what apparently took place.

Each of the experts emphasises his own slant: Hallett stressing the role of the basal ganglia in selecting an energizing particular muscles, Deecke its importance in the initiation of movement, Marsden its pivotal function in the smooth sequencing of motor programs and the late Ed Everts underlining its importance in motor coordination. The controversial long-loop reflexes were covered in a group discussion at the end but this part of the book was poorly edited and does not spell out the issues at stake to the less well informed reader. Burke feels that a primary abnormality of the fusimotor system is unlikely in Parkinson's disease whereas Obeso and Delwaide both independently provide some evidence for increased tonic peripheral inhibition and a reciprocal inhibition in the spinal cord. Perhaps the dissatisfaction I had in reading this book simply reflects the paucity of established facts and my personal difficulties with coming to terms with the jargon which surely leaves all but the cognoscenti cold. However the chapters by Marsden, Deecke and Hallett were notable exceptions to this. The book goes over no new ground and most of the contributors have simply regurgitated previous offerings. Motor physiologists interested in the basal ganglia would find this book too simple and old hat and for those clinicians interested in Parkinson's disease but not *au fait* with the neurophysiological abnormalities in the disease this book would simply confuse rather than instruct.

AL LEES

**Muscle Biopsy: A Practical Approach.** 2nd Ed. By Victor Dubowitz. (Pp 679; £45.00.) London: Bailliere Tindall/WB Saunders, 1985.

This is the awaited second edition of the now classic text by Dubowitz and Brooke first published in 1973. It encapsulates the

great clinical and histopathological experience of the principal author and emphasises the need for expertise in both areas to solve most muscle problems.

The first chapter deals with the procedure of muscle biopsy in some detail and sets out the author's firm preference for needle biopsies, a view that will not be shared by all pathologists who have to report sections prepared from such samples often without adequate clinical details. Needle sampling seems to work best in a laboratory where the clinician who sees the patients is also directly responsible for both taking the biopsy and for its interpretation. This chapter is followed by sections on the various histochemical techniques, a review of normal and pathological findings and a helpful self-teaching section on "How to Read a Biopsy" which highlights the point that the most useful place for this book is next to the microscope. Chapters on Ultrastructural Changes (Dr Caroline Sewry) and Immunocytochemistry (Dr Robin Fitzsimmons) are valuable new additions.

The format of the second part of the book, on the pathology of individual diseases, is essentially unchanged from the first edition although the clinical illustrations and (regrettably) the bar graphs showing the frequency of specific pathological features have been omitted. Each major disease grouping is extensively illustrated by individual case histories accompanied by the relevant histopathological findings. The range of abnormalities is effectively demonstrated in many disorders by showing several cases; for example 13 of spinal muscular atrophy (neonate to adult) and nearly 20 of Duchenne dystrophy. Professor Dubowitz's unique experience of childhood neuromuscular disease is amply illustrated and described in the sections on Diseases of the Lower Motor Neuron, Muscular Dystrophy and Congenital Myopathies. The chapter on metabolic and endocrine myopathy is strong on the genetically determined diseases but acquired (endocrine) myopathies are rather sparsely represented and not illustrated at all, although biopsies from patients with such disorders are common in the general hospital setting. The value of the succinate dehydrogenase reaction (rather than the NADH-TR) in looking for evidence of mitochondrial accumulations might perhaps have been emphasised. There follow chapters on inflammatory muscle disease (10 cases illustrated), a miscellaneous group (including myasthenia, disorders associated with contracture and rigid spine) and Problems in Diagnosis and Interpretation.

The book is nicely presented and, on the

whole, the many photomicrographs (all black and white) are of good quality although a number lack really clear definition and seem slightly hazy. The references are comprehensive and the index satisfactory. The text of the book is both informative and, given the potentially dry nature of the topic, interestingly written. Both clinicians and pathologists dealing with neuromuscular diseases will find much practical guidance here.

CM WILES

**Imaging Anatomy of the Head and Spine. A Photographic Color Atlas of MRI, CT; Gross and Microscopic Anatomy in Axial, Coronal, and Sagittal Planes.** By HN Schnitzlein and F Reed Murtagh. (Pp 323; £149.95.) Baltimore: Urban & Schwarzenberg. UK: Pitman Publishing Ltd, 1985.

The main authors, an anatomist and a radiologist, present as their aim "an atlas that [is] helpful and easy to use for the clinician and radiologist in training and in practice". They may have understated their product for this book proves to be a valuable bench book for solving anatomical problems: a visual *Gray's Anatomy*, an up-dated Ette

It has an extensive anatomical index. The seed corn of the work are the 14 anatomical sections of the brain and adjacent structures (orbits, ears, larynx) and the spine. Each is appropriately stained and splendidly reproduced in colour, as large as life and profusely labelled. These sections are made at different levels and planes of the head and spine, and most of the slices seem to have particular relevance to clinical neurology.

The book is also meant to establish correlations between the naked eye anatomy and various radiological modalities, chiefly computed tomography (232 images) and magnetic resonance (50 images). This is done by placing "look-alike" CT and/or MR images on the page opposite to each anatomical section. This aspect is less successful or valuable, perhaps because the radiological images can never reveal structures in the same rich detail as stained sections. Nor is the MR correlation adequate. Your reviewer found the explanatory text (anatomy for radiologists) facile.

This is an excellent, if expensive, reference book for radiologists and others interpreting CT and MR images, and provides visual anatomical information that is not as readily or attractively packaged elsewhere.

EH BURROWS