the literature on epilepsy surgery. The book was conceived at the International Symposium on Methods of Presurgical Evaluation of Epileptic Patients held in Zurich in 1985, as a tribute to Professor Rudolf Hess. However, it is quite different from the usual publications that follow symposia, and it is organised more in the form of a text book.

It may be divided into four main sections, dealing with basic mechanisms, diagnostic procedures, semiology and surgical treatment. These topics are further divided into a total of 53 chapters, each about 5–7 pages long, usually written by a leading expert in the field with appropriate authority. In addition there are nine brief editorial sections summarising the discussions held at the symposium. The text is well laid out and the reproductions are excellent.

The expressed aim of the editors was that the contributors should concentrate on the more generally valid aspects of each topic, and I think that it is this intention which has led the book to have such merit.

The presurgical evaluation of patients with epilepsy involves a multidisciplinary approach, using clinical skills and psychological, physiological and imaging techniques. These methods are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and have changed a great deal over the last decade. It is essential that workers specialising in one particular aspect are aware of important progress in the associated disciplines in order to efficiently use resources. Certainly the individual topics covered are dealt with in a manner which allows such an integration.

Janz has provided a concluding chapter, in which he considers the implications of these advances for the organisation of epilepsy services in Europe. His overall perspective is interesting. He suggests that the surgical treatment of such patients should be undertaken at six to eight centres in order to concentrate the necessary range of techniques.

I have no hesitation in recommending this book to workers dealing with patients suffering from intractable epilepsy. It is easily read and provides an integration of information that will date less rapidly than most publications in this field.

D FISH

Current Neuro-Ophthalmology Vol I. Edited by Simmons Lessell, JTW Van Dalen. (Pp 367; £64.00.) London: Wolfe Medical, 1988.

Neuro-ophthalmology is a discipline that combines elements of ophthalmology with

neurology and neurosurgery, ENT surgery, radiology, general and paediatric medicine. The annual literature produced by these specialities, varying proportions of which will have neuro-ophthalmological relevance, is enormous. With the development of new techniques within specialities such as MRI and computerised visual field analysis the task of keeping up to date in the subject becomes increasingly more demanding. *Current Neuro-ophthalmology* addresses this problem.

The editors have included 21 chapters, divided into six parts; The Afferent Visual System, The Ocular Motor System, The Pupil, The Orbit, Ocular Manifestation of Neurological Disease, and Diagnostic Methods. The coverage is slightly unbalanced; there is, for example, considerable overlap in the first four chapters (66 pages) (each excellent in its own way) on the optic nerve and chiasm. On the other hand, infranuclear disorders of the ocular motor system, here titled Non Myasthenic Ophthalmoplegia, is covered in 13 pages. Most of the chapter authors have followed their editors' instructions in comprehensively reviewing the previous three years output on their subject. They assume a high level of knowledge in the readership, allowing discussion of new developments to be thorough without being lengthy. This is as it should be. In some chapters, however, such as that on the Neural Integrator of the Ocular Motor System, and the VEP and ERG in clinical neuro-ophthalmology, we are taken through the subject from a more basic level. These latter contributions perhaps belong in a postgraduate text book of the subject rather than update on recent advances. Overall, however, the coverage and standard of review are extremely high.

Some authors introduce a more personal note; I particularly enjoyed Jon Currie's opinionated and punchy review of optic neuritis, and Stanley Thompson's masterly guidance through the pupil literature. Dr Dell'Oosso managed to condense discussion of 160 references on nystagmus and related ocular oscillations into just over 20 pages. Practical advice regarding the usefulness of various diagnostic procedures in for example carotid artery disease affecting the eye, and in the CT versus MRI argument is also provided.

The editors have set themselves an ambitious target and have admirably succeeded; at £64, all practicing neuro-ophthalmologists should have a copy of this volume on their shelves to complement the standard texts.

JOHN ELSTON

The Treatment of Infantile Hydrocephalus 2 vols. By Concezio Di Rocco. (Pp 325; 2 Vols set £146.50.) Boca Raton: CRC Press. UK Distrib: Wolfe Medical, 1988.

The author has painstakingly compiled a review of hydrocephalus; both historical and contemporary aspects are dealt with. As far as his own experience and a reading of the literature provide answers to the many questions that have to be asked, the result is very satisfying. This is not to say that the answers are satisfying. Our understanding of the mechanism of ventricular enlargement, of brain elasticity, of how to maintain appropriate intracranial pressure over a long period of time, leaves much to be desired. Dr Di Rocco has, however, omitted little of what is at present known, and not unnaturally devotes most of his book to the management of hydrocephalus. The occasional infelicities of language and incorrect choice of word do not obscure his meaning.

It would be pleasing if I could write that already this book is out of date. Unhappily the rate of progress in this field is very slow, so that the book can be recommended as a helpful overview of the present state of affairs.

KENNETH THOMAS

Neurosurgeons of the Past. By Louis Bakay. (Pp 109; \$28.50.) Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 1987.

This is a selective account of the activities of certain surgeons, from medieval times onwards, who were particularly concerned with the cranium and its contents. And a good selection it is too. Since we all have our heroes, I will get one quibble over right away and say that the mere passing reference to Percivall Pott was a disappointment. This was, however, softened—not only by Dr Bakay's rare feat in recognising the unusual way that Pott always spelt his first name, but also by the omission of the knighthood conferred many years ago on the great man (albeit deservedly) by Wechsler in his textbook. But Dr Bakay is wrong to say that Pott wrote his elegant treatise on head injuries in 1808 (he had then been dead twenty years); the first edition had appeared in 1760.

It is always agreeable to find a medical book which is a good read rather than tediously informative. Dr Bakay writes chatily and well, recounting early case-histories and giving us nicely reproduced illustrations of the barbarous instruments of the times

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of the barber-surgeons. There are some extraordinary records of survival from brain injury, such as those of Hildanus (1560–1634) who urged both sexual abstinence and the avoidance of laughter on those who had suffered severe head injury. There is a whole chapter devoted to our royalist Sergeant-Surgeon Wiseman, whose timeless advice on trepanation is quoted: that it should be done carefully and “not listening to the prattling of the Standersby”.

These and other familiar characters are here, but Dr Bakay draws attention to others less well known, and he gives particular and deserving notice to the French school of surgery. The chapter on François Quesnay (1694–1784) recounts the remarkable career of a man who became a distinguished early economist after being *chirurgien Royal* and *Premier médecin ordinaire* to Louis XV, the duties including that of adviser on sexual matters between the king and the apparently frigid Madame de Pompadour—who left him an annuity of 4,000 livres. *Tempora mutantur!*

There is a valuable review of the importance of the work of Ernst von Bergmann, on the mechanisms of increased intracranial pressure, which antedated the more refined experiments of Cushing, and Dr Bakay compares their respective findings. The last chapter, on the discovery of the ventricular passages, is particularly well done, apart from the two brief paragraphs on those fascinating structures, the arachnoid granulations, which are a bit of a disappointment as an end to such an enjoyable book.

JOHN POTTER

Magnetic Resonance Imaging in Diseases of the Nervous System. By Ivan Moseley. (Pp 234; £39.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific, 1988.

It is extremely rare in this age of multi-authored texts to come across a book that is written by one person alone. The lack of need to coordinate the contributions from multiple sources ensures that it is up to date and minimises the overlap between chapters. Ivan Moseley is an acknowledged expert in neurodiagnosis from a department of international renown and this book closely reflects his considerable personal expertise. He modestly refers to the text as an introduction to magnetic resonance imaging but this is an understatement of the quality of the content.

There are 13 chapters, of which the first is devoted to the physics of magnetic resonance.

Most physicians would prefer to regard the production of images from magnetism as closely akin to magic, but the author has succeeded in making a complex subject understandable. Eight chapters deal with common presentations of neurological disorder in the brain and are dealt with in a predominantly problem orientated format. There is considerable content of clinical signs and this is most appropriate. The chapters deal with the common indications for MRI in diagnosis of neurological disorders in the brain and there is frequent reference to other diagnostic techniques. The illustrations are generally of high quality with mainly spin echo technique and inversion recovery. The latter images will no doubt prove somewhat alien to American readers where strongly T1-weighted inversion recovery images are rarely used. One chapter covers developmental disorders of the brain including a number of conditions that will be unfamiliar to the average non-specialist but for which MRI is extremely useful and will be of interest to neuroradiologists. The orbit is well covered in a separate chapter and the last two chapters deal with acute and chronic conditions of the cord and spinal canal.

Overall the book is well illustrated and referenced with very few typographical errors and at a reasonable price is highly recommended as an introduction for the individual and will serve as an extremely good reference manual for departmental purchase.

TIM COX

JOHN BINGHAM

Advancing Frontiers in Alzheimer's Disease Research. Edited by George G Glenner and Richard J Wurtman. (Pp 279; \$22.50.) Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.

This book represents the proceedings of the symposium which was held in 1986 and sponsored by the Mind Science Foundation.

The chairman of this meeting was Dr George Glenner who describes in the preface an exciting closed meeting with considerable cross fertilisation of ideas. It would appear that the meeting was indeed successful but whether the proceedings of such a meeting need be published is less certain. The chapters vary between genuine discussions of theoretical aspects to chapters which read as formal research reports with method and result sections. The theoretical chapters by Wurtman and Cotman are both notable and they refer to the possibility that damage to

susceptible neurons may have a snowball effect. In the case of Wurtman's model there may be “auto-cannabilism” of membranes to maintain acetylcholine synthesis. In the model suggested by Cotman enhanced plasticity early in the disease following partial denervation may increase susceptibility to excitotoxin mediated cellular damage. The discussion on the relationship between Down's syndrome and Alzheimer's disease is also of particular interest, but this chapter, together with those on amyloid, now seems dated with the subsequent demonstration that a familial Alzheimer's disease gene is indeed located on chromosome 21 as is the coding gene for the amyloid precursor protein. One irritating feature which could have been easily avoided is the inclusion of all the figures and tables at the end of each chapter rather than at an appropriate point in the text. This rapidly changing field renders redundant those symposia that rely on the publication of the most recent results whereas those which genuinely attempt synthesis and discussion of the theoretical aspect survive. There are sufficient chapters of the latter type to recommend this book for neurologists to read but not to purchase.

M ROSSOR

Laser Applications in Neurosurgery. Edited by Raymond Sawaya, John M Tew, Jr. (Pp 516; £21.95.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific, 1988.

This is a small book in the *State of the Art Reviews* series which well fulfils its title. The editors and a number of the contributors are from the University of Cincinnati Medical Center where laser surgery is clearly well established. The introduction is followed by a short section on laser physics which is succinct and sufficient. The account of laser safety which follows is a detailed presentation relevant to FDA regulations and the role of the nurse in the operating theatre, and happens to include among the appendices an interesting diagram of the layout for a procedure.

The authors from Cincinnati then describe and illustrate the use of the carbon dioxide laser in the excision of 50 basal meningiomas and two chordomas for which the micro-manipulator and focused beam achieve sharp dissection and defocused higher wattage tumour vapourisation. Transphenoidal microsurgery for the removal of pituitary micro and macro adenomas by defocused laser at 5 and 10 watts is well