Book reviews

pathogenesis of some of these conditions. In
the section on slow viruses, it would have
perhaps been useful to have discussed scrapie
and its pathogenesis in more detail and also
to have covered Visna infection of sheep.

Overall the authors have done a fine job
and have produced a thoroughly worthwhile
volume which is extremely well referenced.
The book is not cheap, but in view of its
length the price is not unreasonable. I shall
therefore find this useful as a ready to hand
reference source and I am sure that it
deserves to be on the shelves of any good
neurological library.

PG KENNEDY

Edited by R E Kendall, A K Zeally. (Pp 827;
£42.50.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone.

The Companion to Psychiatric Studies has for
many years been the principal textbook used
by postgraduate students of psychiatry,
thou its ascendancy has been
challenged recently by the appearance of two
competing textbooks from the Maudsley
Hospital and Oxford. The fourth addition of
the book will without doubt re-establish its
position as the leader in the field.

The problems confronting the editors of any
textbook of psychiatry are enormous.
The subject does not have the clear bound-
daries as, for instance, a discipline like
neurology. Knowledge of the causes of the
major mental illnesses is still in its infancy,
and for many conditions treated by
psychiatrists there are competing and often
mutually exclusive perspectives. This leads to
the difficulty of how to be comprehensive
without being over inclusive. The principal
North American textbook of psychiatry covers
three weighty volumes and ex-
emplifies the latter problem. The Companion,
in marked contrast, manages in less than 800
pages to give a clear and concise overview of
the subject.

In this new edition the editors have
introduced two completely new chapters, on
psychiatric epidemiology and epilepsy, as
well as re-writes, by new authors, of seven
other chapters. All the remaining chapters
have been substantially updated. The format
of the book is as in previous editions, with
the early sections focusing on the sciences
and allied disciplines relevant to psychiatry.
The remaining 28 chapters cover the range
of problems seen in psychiatric practice in-
cluding sections on mental handicap, child
psychiatry, adolescent psychiatry and psy-
chiatric disorders of child birth. Professor
Kendall contributes all three chapters on the
major psychoses and it would be hard to find
a better summary of the current state of
knowledge.

No text book can claim to be totally
comprehensive and its aims should be more
modest, serving as a source of basic informa-
tion, as well as providing a jumping-off point
for further research and study. In this respect
the Companion to Psychiatric Studies will
remain a valuable guide to postgraduate
students of psychiatry, psychiatrists and
other professionals seeking an accessible and
sound guide to the field.

RJ DOLAN

Applied Neurophysiology. By J A Simpson,
W Fitch. (Pp 358; £35.00.) Guildford:

This is a text book of human physiology
directed specifically towards anaesthetists,
who as the authors note, probably now
comprise the largest hospital speciality. The
authors' aim has been to provide a descrip-
tion of the general principles and crucial
concepts necessary for a sound understand-
ing of nervous system function. Coverage is
comprehensive but with emphasis on such
areas of particular relevance to anaesthetists
as pain, respiration and mechanism of
arousal, attention and consciousness.

The book comprises 28 chapters arranged
in five groups. Part 1 is entitled Cellular
Organisation of the Nervous System and is
followed by The Afferent Nervous System,
Higher Nervous Functions, Interaction with
the Environment and finally Regulation of the
Internal Environment. In general the text is
very clearly written and much more readable
than is often the case with works in this field.
The title is perhaps somewhat misleading
since the clinical content is rather less than I
for one had anticipated. For example, al-
though the physiology of the neuromuscular
function is of course well described, there is
surprisingly little on myasthenia and related
disorders. The authors make a particular
point of the illustrations, noting that in many
publications there is over simplification, and
especially omission of the connections of the
mid-brain and diencephalon. Here an
attempt has been made to give a truer
representation but this results in some
exceedingly complicated figures, not wholly
remedied by the unusually lengthy figure
legends. I wonder how much the addition of
colour would have added to the cost of the book—shades of grey are really inadequate
for figures of this complexity.

This work will be a most useful addition to
the library of any department of anaesthes-
ics or neurology and is competitively
priced to be affordable by the individual;
those who do buy it and who make use of it
will consider the money well spent.

NM MURRAY

Cranial Magnetic Resonance Imaging. By
Allen D Elster. (Pp 420; £75.00.) Edinburgh:

Since 1980 magnetic resonance imaging
(MRI) has evolved from the research
laboratory to become a routine part of
diagnostic radiology and although there is a
plethora of specialist journal articles and
several books devoted to it, the overall place
of MRI in the diagnosis of cranial disease is
only now being established. Allen Elster in
his latest text from the Bowman Gray School
of Medicine, North Carolina, has attempted
to consolidate the sum of knowledge of
cranial MRI and condense this information
into an easily assimilated form which he
claims is more than just a book on “CT with
different pictures”. How far has he suc-
cceeded in explaining these concepts of bio-
physics and imaging strategies?

Generally, his aims are fulfilled: the book
is divided into twelve chapters starting with
the now obligatory descriptions of MRI
machines and the physical principles of the
signals produced. This is followed by a
comprehensive explanation of pulse sequen-
ces with good examples of the different
appearances when each parameter in turn is
changed. These early sections are marred
only by the incorrect underestimated values
given for T1 and T2 of liquids such as CSF or
urine which should have relaxation times of
at least 3,000 ms and 2,500 ms respectively
(pages 13, 15). This introduction leads to
sections on normal anatomy, normal
variants and congenital and developmental
anomalies. They adequately cover the com-
mon diagnostic areas.

In the following chapters cerebral disease is
described on a novel patho-anatomical
basis being divided into a discussion of the
ventricles and subarachnoid spaces in health
and disease, neoplasms, cerebral vascular
disease, infections and inflammatory dis-
eases, degenerative diseases and abnor-
malities of the skull base and orbit. Chapter
10 entitled “Hemorrhage, trauma and

Prior to this century, psychiatrists were neuropsychiatrists, and it was axiomatic that they understood the brain and its influence in disease states. When a majority of them opted to become psychologists and social workers, the brain was left to neurology, and a Cartesian brace froze further understanding of the relationship between the brain and behaviour. In the last 20 years, neuropsychiatry has been rejuvenated, partly on account of the growing number of patients who are dissatisfied with the care that this dichotomy between neurology and psychiatry provides for them, and secondly because of the rapid expansion of the neurosciences with its explosion of knowledge regarding brain/behaviour relationships. With the backing of the American Psychiatric Association, which this book has, however, this strategy is dependent on the quality and analysis of the references quoted. These are listed alphabetically at the end of each chapter but as is the case with most books, despite some additions at the proof stage, they appear dated. It is mitigated to some extent by using 1987 conference proceedings rather than refereed journals but unfortunately they are often only abstracts and difficult for the reader to obtain unless he is a member of the society or has been to the conference. MRI is such a fast moving subject that up-to-date references are essential.

As a single author text it has the advantage of consistency of style and although didactic at times, it covers the subjects critically and in adequate depth to be clinically useful. A compact informative volume of 423 pages, it is an easily readable collection of facts which is good value at £75 and is pitched at a level that will prove useful to radiologists, neurologists and neurosurgeons who have just acquired MRI facilities. It covers many unusual presentations of common diseases as well as a sprinkling of rare lesions making it a good aide memoire for the more experienced. It would also be an ideal reference for any doctor who wishes to assess the significance of an MRI report on a patient with a cranial problem referred by him to a radiodiagnostic department.

DONALD M HADLEY

The discipline will be given a welcome boost, and no doubt many enthusiastic students will be encouraged to adopt this as the definitive manual for the subject.

This, however, is a disappointing book. There are other much better books on neuropsychiatry available some of which, being single authored, bring homogeneity to the discipline and to the text. It is not clear why the particular authors who wrote chapters in this text were chosen, and what their particular expertise in the field of neuropsychiatry is. However, there is much unevenness in the book, and this reviewer began to lose confidence in the expertise that was being offered. A few examples for illustration: the lack of mention of the use of the electroencephalogram in the diagnosis of delirium, and in dementia only “if there is a specific clinical indication” —Pick’s disease or Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, for example, do not appear to be included; interictal epileptic psychosis is said to have a prevalence of 10%-30% amongst patients with complex partial seizures; the starting dose for valproic acid is given as 1500 mg on the chapter on degenerative diseases, such conditions as myasthenia gravis, Guillain-Barré, syringomyelia and dystonia are included, etc. It is possible to go on. The style of some of the authors is simply patronising, “dementia is a disease of the brain, not of the mind, and is not a functional disorder”, while others introduce neologisms that put the reader’s teeth on edge, e.g. “dellitogonic”.

The content of the book is said to “define disease entities that should be subsumed under the rubric of neuropsychiatry”, but the choice not all would agree with. Post-traumatic neurotic syndromes are not covered under head injuries, and a substantial selection of the book is given over to endocrine, vitamin and metabolic disorders which are more appropriately adumbrated with organic psychiatry, and, as with most of the conditions described here, are much better covered in Lishman’s elegant text on the subject.

The best one can say of this book is that it is nicely laid out and visually satisfying. It is hoped that those that buy it will not have their interest in neuropsychiatry dampened, and that some of them will go on to gain clinical experience in the area which clearly seems to have been lacking by some of the contributors.

MICHAEL R TRIMBLE