by studying extracellular potassium homeostasis during stimulation in hippocampal slices from rats at different stages of postnatal development.

There is still much unanswered about the mechanism of epileptogenesis, and about the relationship between epileptogenesis, seizure-expression, and excitotoxicity, but this volume provides an interesting up-date on some of the more central questions that need to be asked.

ASTRID G CHAPMAN


The title of this book does not prepare you for the contents. It is quite unique. This is not a textbook of psychiatry. It assumes the reader has a good factual grounding in psychiatry. The book is an attempt to put on paper the accumulated wisdom of thirty years of practical advice in clinical psychiatry.

I enjoyed reading this book. The author's stance is very much akin to my own and it is pleasant to have one prejudices reinforced.

I would not send trainees out to buy it but if a copy is available it will do them no harm and could do them good. Unfortunately, I do not think one can learn this kind of wisdom easily from a book. That needs time, experience and practice.

C TONKS


Thousands of published papers and hundreds of symposia devoted to headache have materialised since the Lance's first edition in 1969. Approaches to the many unsolved dilemmas have followed the directions of other neuroscience research, leaning on neurotransmitter chemistry, receptor pharmacology, vascular and other imaging techniques. But since these have failed to yield adequate explanations of "how and why the head aches", and since countless trials have secured the most modest of improvements for the headache sufferer, we now see the intrusions of fringe medicine and its polygenic practitioners entering the arena with herbal cures, biofeedback, acupuncture, and elimination diets. The student of migraine history will find none of this new, nor a matter for surprise; but it is of interest that in a successful attempt to be comprehensive, if perhaps too open minded, James Lance pays more than lip service to these issues e.g., providing two curious appendices on relaxation exercises and, hyperventilation.

The main theme and Lance's eclectic approach remains similar to earlier editions. In an excellent and thoroughly revised text, he has arrayed the many headaches to conform with the International Headache Society classification. There are many new items, including an up-to-date appraisal of sumatriptan, to maintain our interest; though one occasionally feels let down when he refrains from providing his own opinions on controversial topics such as the rival merits of ergotamine and dihydroergotamine, or the basis of post-traumatic headaches. The text is well written and well illustrated; references are adequate rather than cumbersome, though the selection won't flatter all contributors to the vast headache literature.

Thoroughness, practicality, and a widely based scholarly view of a huge subject are the hallmarks of this splendid text and explain its continuing supremacy in a well stacked competitive market.

JMS PEARCE


As a source of seizures, the occipital lobes have been somewhat ignored. A colloquium, held in 1992, provided the basis for this publication which covers aspects of anatomical and biochemical development of the infant brain, and maturation of neuro-physiological parameters as well as seizures and epilepsies originating in the occipital regions.

There are four main areas covered in the chapters specifically relating to seizures. The possible relationship of migraine, particularly basilar migraine, to occipital epilepsy is examined in depth. Arguments given in one chapter, suggesting that there is a migraine-epilepsy syndrome, are countered by EEG evidence to the contrary in another contribution. Clearly there is scope for further study in this area. As would be anticipated, benign occipital epilepsies are reported in some detail. The splitters are in the ascendant! Benign childhood epilepsy with occipital paroxysms can now be further divided into early and late onset variants; or may present with prolonged seizures and automatisms. A high incidence of cerebro-vascular pathology is reported in the chapter on symptomatic occipital epilepsy.

The relationship between photosensitivity and seizures originating in the occipital region is discussed with evidence given that not all TV induced seizures are primary generalised.

On the whole the text is succinct and well referenced; but, at times, the English is a little quaint, reflecting the predominantly Italian authorship. In addition, the editors could, with advantage, have pruned repetitive descriptions of seizures and other aspects of occipital epilepsies. Those writing on basic science aspects did not always successfully discuss the implications for occipital epilepsies. I found the book, but I doubt that it will have a wide appeal. Perhaps its most important message is that occipital epilepsy is an interesting condition that needs a great deal of further study.

SJ WALLACE


This volume of Advances and Technical Standards should be bought by many, as it contains Bernard Williams' longest article to date on syringomyelia and related hindbrain syndromes. As he is a world authority on this controversial subject, it deserves a monograph or even a whole book by him, so any text of length deserves attention. His experimental work confirming Gardner's principles is not the original ideas of aetiology, (which he classifies as "suck, slosh and slump"—descriptions as colourful as their author), as well as his classification of hind brain syndromes, are of enormous importance and are central to the text's appeal. Perhaps his unswerving attachment to foramen manum decompression without dural grafting and his neurological recovery rates are described, but he fails to comment on results of other authors. The chapter on primary syringomyelia shunting, although he correctly decries it for its dangers, in short, wonderful but flawed.

Of the remainder, this volume is the proverbial curate's egg. In the Advances section, Professor Harding's excellent chapter on neurogenetics should worry any surgeon who has removed a cerebellar hamartoma. Less restful is the rest of the body for Von Hippel Lindau features. This chapter is followed later in the Standards section with one on the surgery of the condition and related disorders. Although a reasoned approach, it is not a problem that many would find particularly challenging and most would expect good results. Much more use will be the chapter in "Advances" on the art of flow measurement using ultrasound and its clinical application, as will be the "Standards" chapter on Medulloblastomas, which presses the long term need despite the author's failure to achieve a technical cure from the malignancy.

MICHAEL POWELL