

BOOK REVIEW

An Introduction to Neurosurgery. 3rd Edition. Bryan Jennett. London. William Heinemann, Medical Books Ltd. Price £9.95, 366 pages.

It is easier to write for peers than for students. The line between the accepted fundamentals of the subject and new developments that may be tomorrow's fundamentals is hard to draw. Yet, without an examination of what is new a book like this lacks strength. As a leader in the physiology and pathology of ICP, Jennett succeeds admirably in presenting the new understanding of that particular subject. Other parts of the book are sound but less inspired. Inevitably and perhaps, rightly, personal bias in several areas comes through, but without a clue that the views expressed may not be shared by the majority of neurosurgeons the uninitiated (to whom the book is directed) may be misled.

Some arguable statements and opinions: "Acute prolapse [of a cervical disc] is more commonly central than lateral".

Conservative measures for cervical root compression are "at least equally effective" as operative.

"Sometimes a person with [cervical] spondylosis develops paraplegia over a period of minutes without any obvious trauma".

"Ventriculo-atrial shunt is now a widely practised operation". (Is this as true today as it was ten years ago?)

Spinal injuries "are largely the concern of orthopaedic surgeons". "No special care [of the bladder] is required in the first twenty-four hours".

Arteriovenous malformations: "Dementia and slowly progressive hemiplegia are late developments".

After cerebral tumour removal: "if a patient becomes arteriosclerotic, the area of brain surrounding the operation site . . . may be deprived more severely than the rest of the brain and focal signs and symptoms may then recur".

There are gaps in the section on neuroradiology. Cerebral angiography is well described but there is nothing on spinal angiography. The value of modern tomography (e.g. in obscure spinal fractures, basal skull lesions, acoustic neuromas) is ignored. There is no

mention of the rapidly developing field of differential arterial catheterization for both diagnosis and therapeutic embolization of a variety of vascular lesions nor of retrograde venography. Peripheral nerve surgery is evidently regarded as outside the neurosurgeon's province, since it is not considered at all.

Without particularly searching for them I encountered eighteen printing errors, some of them annoying, that had slipped past the proof-readers.

This is the third edition since the book first appeared in 1964. Its popularity is deserved. The author has succeeded in keeping the size down and with it the price. The material is consistently well organized and written with a clarity that is not always found in text books. It will remain a favourite with medical students, neurosurgical nurses and non-neurosurgical practitioners. Of the texts catering to that market, this is one of the best.

T. P. Morley, Toronto

BOOKS RECEIVED

Topics in Child Neurology, Edited by Michael E. Blaw, Isabelle Rapin and Marcel Kinsbourne, Spectrum Publications, Inc., 175-20 Wexford Terrace, N.Y. 11432., \$25.00, 337 p.

The Neuropsychopathology of Written Language, Joseph H. Rosenthal, Nelson-Hall Inc., 325 W. Jackson Blvd. Chicago 60606., \$12.95, 166 p.

Persistent Pain: Methods of Treatment., Sampson Lipton, Academic Press, 24 Oval Road, London NW1 7DX, £10.50, 272 p.

Current Developments in Psychopharmacology, Vol. 4., W. B. Essman and L. Valzelli. Spectrum Publications, Inc. 175-20 Wexford Terrace, N.Y. 11432, \$25.00, 296 p.

Biological Bases of Psychiatric Disorders, Alan Frazer and Andrew Winokur, Spectrum Publications Inc. 175-20 Wexford Terrace, N.Y. 11432, \$15.00, 271 p.

A Clinician's View of Neuromuscular Diseases, Michael H. Brooke. The Williams and Wilkins Company, \$18.95, 225 p.