

whole book had to be re-written. Having regard to this we would have expected to see Argyll-Robertson spelt without a hyphen!

These are, however, small drawbacks in a book which we have all come to regard with the greatest affection and admiration, and it is a great tribute to British neurology that a new edition should have appeared under the stress of wartime conditions and limitations.

We hope this is *not* the author's swan-song, but that we may see the tenth edition at an early date, produced under normal conditions.

G. W. T. H. FLEMING.

Diseases of the Nervous System. By F. M. R. WALSH, *O.B.E.*, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P. Fourth edition. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone, Ltd., 1945. Pp. xvi + 360. Price 15s.

The fourth edition of this well-known text-book once again fills us with envy of the author's exceptional ability to paint a vivid picture with the utmost economy. And yet a certain leisurely graciousness of style removes all traces of the "cram-book," and puts this work among the few volumes of instruction that can be read from cover to cover with no flagging of interest. The first 60 pages provide a clear and informative description and explanation of the general principles and practical factors in neurological diagnosis, the next 250 pages describe the more common neurological disorders, and there follow a short chapter on the psychoneuroses and a very useful scheme of examination of the nervous system.

Neurologists have been accused of unduly subordinating treatment to diagnosis, and it is a pleasure to find the therapeutic aspect far from neglected. Both in the general text and in an excellent *ad hoc* chapter advice as to treatment is practical, pertinent, and where necessary detailed, and there is a good sprinkling of useful prescriptions. Welcome emphasis is laid on the necessity of studying the patient's comfort and happiness, as well as the disease process, and of allowing as normal a life as is practical in such chronic affections as disseminated sclerosis, epilepsy, cerebral vascular degeneration, etc. "It may be much more important for a young housewife threatened with disability . . . by such a malady as disseminated sclerosis to use her resources in the obtaining of additional domestic help . . . than to expend them on some form of physiotherapy or expensive medication from which no candid adviser can promise her anything" (p. 314) is characteristic of the author's sage attitude. Nevertheless there is no lack of controversial matter. Dipping into the chapter on epilepsy alone, not everyone will agree that "it is an exaggeration to say that there is a characteristic epileptic temperament which can be identified as such even when no fits are observed" (p. 120); and many harassed physicians would wish that the epileptic fit could always be differentiated from hysterical simulations as easily as the writer suggests (p. 125). A more serious matter for debate is the author's admittedly conservative attitude towards new methods of treatment and diagnosis. Even granting his assertion that "the path of our advance is strewn with their abandoned debris," it is arguable that a douche of cold water from so eminent an authority will do more harm than good, and may well encourage many overworked and, dare we say, lazy-minded physicians to condemn untried new remedies of real value.

The chapter on the psychoneuroses, naturally of special interest to psychiatrists, reflects the difference in symptomatic colouring between the neurotic seen by the neurologist and the psychiatrist. The subject is clearly approached from the angle of neurological practice, and thus we find a section entitled "the 'traumatic' neurosis" occupying six to seven times as much space as that given to obsessional states. As long as the author remains on descriptive ground his pictures of the neurotic are as wholly satisfying as those in the rest of the book. When he enters the speculative field, as in his differen-

tiation of anxiety neurosis from hysteria by terming the former a reaction by over-action and the latter a reaction by under-action (p. 322), he invites criticism. Suffice it to say here that this hypothesis affords a splendid example of that "verbal simplification," in which, the author assures us elsewhere in the book, "nature is not interested." Our heart, however, warms towards him for his welcome and timely advice as to the dangers of "exhaustive and expensive search for hypothetical foci of chronic infection in the subjects of the anxiety neurosis" (p. 325). How often have we found both anxiety and hysterical symptoms fixed in the patient's mind, because some distinguished physician stressed the possibilities of an organic origin. There are, alas, many general physicians and even a few psychiatrists who might well take this warning to heart.

The printing, illustrations and general arrangement of the book are admirable, but it is aggravating to find that a large proportion of the textual references to the figures are incorrect. These errors (which no doubt will be remedied in the next printing) are to some extent offset by the excellent system of cross-references, which saves the reader a host of trouble.

L. C. COOK.