

## Notices and Books

**CLINICAL NEUROSURGERY — VOLUME 26.** Proceedings of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, Washington D.C. 1979. Published by Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore/London, available in Canada from: MacMillan of Canada, 70 Bond Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1Y3, editor-in-chief Peter W. Carmel M.D., 691 pages. 1979. \$60.50.

The book, CLINICAL NEUROSURGERY — Volume 26 is well-known to me. In essence it is the publication of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons. The editorial board is the program committee for each annual meeting. It is thus an annual review of the most up to date neurosurgical thinking over a wide spectrum of neurosurgical endeavors.

The field of neurosurgery has expanded exponentially over the years, and to some extent, has been narrowed with the approaches by vascular surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, and ear, nose and throat surgeons. It is virtually impossible to cover the entire field each year. Nevertheless, were a neurosurgeon in training or in practice to be restricted to one publication, he could do no better than avail himself of this annual compendium.

This particular volume, dedicated to Dr. Charles Drake, the honored guest and principal speaker, is mainly devoted to vascular cerebral surgery, but there is excellent coverage on the anatomy of the posterior fossa and spinal cord and peripheral nerve surgery, as well as smaller coverage of a wide range of neurosurgical problems.

Dwight Parkinson, M.D.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM — 4th Edition, 1979, David Bowsher, Blackwell Mosby Book Distributors, 86 Northline Road, Toronto, Ontario M4B 3E5. 182 pages. \$13.25 Canadian.**

At the end of a neurohistology lecture the student mutters, "So myelin

is like a string of sausages," and copies this down in his notebook. David Bowser offers beginning students an updated version of a text of such pithy analogies concerning neuroanatomy and neurophysiology. It is not truly an introduction but is designed to serve either in place of or as a supplement to study notes that an enterprising student might produce of material worthy of recall in a neuroscience course. Essential terms are printed in heavy type, and the descriptions are often perspicuous: "The whole of the forebrain grows in a semi-helical fashion . . . , starting from a transverse axis running through the interventricular foramen . . . Because of this, the lateral ventricles and structures contained within the forebrain are almost C-shaped (p. 79)". The proper use of figures makes the shape of the ventricles and the ensuing discussion of deep telencephalic structures totally comprehensible. The reader is left with the feeling that he has grasped the true essence of neuroscience.

But, alas, there are grave errors. Unperturbed by some other force in the education process, the unsuspecting student may be left believing that the equilibrium potential of an ion is a potential difference which renders the membrane impermeable to the ion (p. 21), or that depolarization always occurs with an increase in membrane permeability (p. 24). He or she may happily accept that presynaptic inhibition occurs only in a synaptic glomerulus and is really postsynaptic inhibition after all, and that the result of vestibular damage is nystagmus toward the affected side. The author has made an impressive and often highly effective effort to reduce a difficult subject to the smallest comprehensible package, and the result will certainly be palatable for the beginning student. But, the author apparently does not understand some of the basic tenets of physiology, resulting in fanciful explanations which are frankly wrong. The student will say of this book, hopefully before his examination, "So I should have read only the neuroanatomy sections". The

lesson may not be worth the price in confusion.

Larry M. Jordan, Ph.D.

**CLINICAL NEUROPHARMACOLOGY.** Henn Kutt and Fletcher McDowell, with contributions by H. Masur and H.W. Murray. Vol. 4 of *Monographs in Clinical Pharmacology*, Azarnoff, D.L. (ed.), Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, 1979. 213 pages. \$28.15.

Kutt and McDowell have written a remarkably concise yet wide-ranging handbook of drug therapy in nervous system disorders. The book impresses by its immediate usefulness in helping the physician — especially the non-specialist practitioner — in choosing and understanding an appropriate therapy for central nervous system disease. Pharmacologic principles are succinctly explained in Chapter 1; treatment is described, in ten subsequent chapters, for: seizure disorders, extrapyramidal syndromes cerebrovascular disease, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis, head pain (including facial pain), metabolic and vitamin-deficiency diseases affecting the nervous system, malignant gliomas and nervous system infections. A succinct final chapter on drug-induced disorders of nervous system fills an important cautionary need.

There is no dissembling nor indefinite discussion in the recommendations of therapy throughout the book; a clear statement is made of drug, dose and regimen for each disorder dealt with. To the book's great credit considerable attention is given to the concept of therapeutic drug levels and their monitoring to achieve effective treatment with minimal toxicity and side-effects. The chapters on seizure disorders and extrapyramidal syndromes, in this regard, are especially well-done.

In so short a volume (less than 170 pages of actual text) it is not surprising that no time is spent on differential diagnosis, hence the effectiveness of many of the suggested therapies will