Book Reviews

DIABETIC NEUROPATHY. By Peter James Dyck, P.K. Thomas, Arthur K. Asbury, Albert I. Winegard and Daniel Porte. Published by W.B. Saunders Company, 1987. 322 pages. $117Cdn approx.

There are six million persons in the United States who suffer from diabetes mellitus, a prevalence that is probably representative of most western countries. Although the prevalence of the neuropathy is not known, the editors estimate it is 10%. The symptoms are remarkably varied and distressing. Unfortunately, the mechanism is still unknown, and there is no specific treatment of proven value. Nonetheless, in recent years there has been an encouraging growth of research on the subject. This has resulted in new hope, and even practical suggestions, as to how diabetic neuropathy might be managed.

The five editors, all internationally recognized scientists, have assembled an additional forty-five authors, allowing thirty chapters to be written. The first section deals with the clinical syndrome of diabetes mellitus. The next section discusses epidemiology, diagnosis, staging and classification, focal and multifocal neuropathies, polyneuropathy, autonomic neuropathy, vascular abnormalities and hypoglycemia. There is a particularly detailed section on motor function, cutaneous sensation, cardiovascular autonomic neuropathy, pupillary functions, motor testing, sexual and bladder dysfunction, gastrointestinal symptoms and electrophysiological testing. The section on therapy and therapeutic trials gives a comprehensive discussion of the highly controversial topic of therapy with myoinositol and aldose reductose inhibitors. In the same section, there are clearly described, and more practical, discussions of vitamin therapy and management of autonomic neuropathy, the diabetic foot and intractable pain. The section on pathology and pathophysiology provides state-of-the-art descriptions of human pathology, animal pathology and pathophysiology, diabetes in DB Wistar rats, axonal transport, the nerve microenvironment, energy metabolism, altered myoinositol metabolism and the nature of inositol phospholipids.

The text is detailed, yet well organized and clearly written. Each chapter has a table at the beginning which lists the main topics by page number for quick reference. Most chapters end with a concisely worded conclusion. Some of the chapters are small, consisting of only a page and a half and a few references. These could have been combined with other chapters. Acronyms are wisely kept to a minimum but there is no listing of their meaning at the beginning of each chapter, so that one has the irritating chore of searching for it through the text.

This is a superb book, the first of its kind, and likely to be a standard for many years. It should be purchased by all those who have anything to do with clinical or research activity, not only in diabetic neuropathy but in the broader subjects of diabetes mellitus and peripheral neuropathy.

Charles Bolton
London, Ontario

HANDBOOK OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE. Edited by William C. Koller. Published by Marcel Dekker, Inc. 520 pages.

This is a compact book on Parkinson's disease made up of 26 chapters. The topics are well chosen and the authors are authorities in the fields to which they contribute. The chapters are clearly written and the book provides a good survey of current knowledge and opinion concerning the disease. The introduction states that the book should be useful for the clinician in charge of everyday care of patients, and for the investigative scientist. There are naturally some limitations, however. The chapter on levodopa does not discuss early combination therapy with dopamine agonists, although most neurologists with a special interest in the disease would certainly regard this as an important topic for treating the majority of patients. In the chapter on artificial dopamine agonists, black and white illustrations of "violaceous capillary networks" and "reddened oedematous skin" are not very helpful. One important area of advance in studying Parkinson's disease is the use of new imaging techniques such as PET and MRI, and it might have been useful to have a chapter addressing this topic. Nevertheless, the overall quality of the book more than makes up for such occasional lapses. In the opinion of this reviewer the book will be of most value to neurologists who want an "update" of progress in Parkinson's disease over the last 5-10 years.

Donald B. Calne
Vancouver, B.C.

CLINICAL PEDIATRIC NEUROLOGY. A SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS APPROACH. By Gerald M. Fenichel. Published by W.B. Saunders, 1988. 401 pages. $44Cdn approx.

This well written and attractively produced book by one of the most respected paediatric neurologists in the United States, is very clinical in scope and is organized by signs and symptoms rather than traditional categories of diseases. The 18 chapters are heralded by such titles as Paroxysmal disorders, Headache, The hypotonic infant, Ataxia, Hemiplegia, Disturbances in sensation, Disorders of ocular motility, and Disorders of cranial volume and shape. Tables are simple but useful, such as one listing 13 common anticonvulsants with recommended starting dosage, maintenance dosage, serum concentrations (therapeutic ranges), and half-lives. Regrettably, concentrations are not expressed in SI units in the table, though cited in the text. Several examples of EEGs illustrate classical

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epileptic types; calibrations are not shown but might have been useful in conditioning inexperienced physicians to be more critical in comparing traces. Structural lesions are highlighted by good illustrations of computed tomographic scans and, in a few instances, MRI scans. The sections dealing with metabolic diseases and with neuromuscular diseases appropriately focus on clinical rather than laboratory aspects, though a few muscle biopsies are illustrated.

I found few items with which I disagree, though in the interest of brevity and clear factual statement without ambiguity, the depth of discussion is limited and controversial topics are avoided. Surgical aspects of paediatric neurology are also largely excluded. References are limited in number, but carefully selected and generally recent and useful for initiating a more detailed library review of a particular topic.

In general, this book is a good introduction to neurological disease in children and a convenient reference for non-neurological clinicians. I would recommend it to paediatric residents and paediatricians desiring to update their knowledge in neurology, and to adult and paediatric neurology residents in their initial contact with neurological disease in children.

Harvey B. Sarnat
Calgary, Alberta

CHARCOT THE CLINICIAN: THE TUESDAY LESSONS. By Jean-Martin Charcot. Translated with commentary by Christopher Goetz. Published by Raven Press, 1987. 223 pages. $67Cdn approx.

One hundred years ago Eiffel was constructing his tower, Korsakoff was describing his "psychosis", Horsley had just successfully removed the first spinal cord tumor in man, and the first volume of Gowers' manual had just appeared. In Paris, Charcot was at the height of his career and had made Paris a medical center for neurology where both North Americans and continental Europeans flocked. Despite the enormous influence that Charcot has had on subsequent generations of neurologists, he has remained a largely enigmatic figure known best to the English speaking world by Bailey's translation of Guillain's biography which is largely hagiographic and spare in critical analysis and insight. Those who have read commentary on Charcot's forays into hysteria and hypnosis have found that he has generally been badly served. Efforts of this kind are commonplace in the careers of truly original minds.

Charcot's Tuesday lessons have remained the most important piece of Charcotiana which have remained untranslated into English. For those who read French they help in putting the great neurologist into proper perspective. C.G. Goetz does his colleagues a most valuable service in translating these lessons into English during the 100th anniversary year of their transcription. Translators commonly suffer at the hands of critics. They are apt to be belittled for missing the nuances of language and can expect little credit for what are really someone else's words unless they can provide the added dimension which comes from critical in-depth analysis. Dr. Goetz succeeds most admirably both in constructing the vivid and fascinating context of late 19th century Paris and in executing the best exposition and analysis of Charcot that I have read. Neurologists with a bent for history will find this book difficult to put down, replete as it is with hypotheses if not answers to many questions they have asked themselves over the years. The background and the biographical and bibliographic details are fascinating enough that the book is a treasure even if one ignores the actual case presentations. They are not to be ignored. To paraphrase Mark Twain's comment about his own father, the amusement of young physicians with the primitiveness of their predecessors gives way in later life to amazement at their cleverness. Similarly, some readers will undoubtedly be surprised to find many "modern" concepts in the words of Charcot in the Tuesday lessons. His discussion of Gilles de la Tourette syndrome left little to add and his perceptions of the importance of genetic factors in neurologic disease, although perhaps overstated, may yet be more correct than are generally thought. I find it difficult to find fault with this book excepting for some gratuitous comments on Charcot's attitude towards inherited neurological diseases in Jews. Goetz appears to have accepted the Bell side of the Bell/Magendie battle and gives 1892 as the date of the first printed edition of the lessons (my copy of Vol. 2 was published in 1889). Also Goetz has only selected 9 volume one cases for translation and there are many others untranslated in the two volume "Lecons du Mardi". These have become rather scarce items even if one could read them in the original text. As with Spillane's "Doctrine of the Nerves", this reviewer wishes he could have written "Charcot the Clinician". A translation of the remaining cases would not be unwelcome particularly from Dr. Goetz.

George Ebers
London, Ontario

CONSCIOUSNESS, AWARENESS, AND PAIN IN GENERAL ANAESTHESIA. Edited by M. Rosen and J.N. Lunn. Published by Butterworths, 1987 (Toronto). 195 pages. $42Cdn approx.

This multiauthored book was stimulated by a multidisciplinary workshop that took place in Cardiff, Wales in June of 1986. Awareness during anaesthesia is frequently discussed by anaesthetists, but even the most recent general textbooks do not develop this topic. This compact book corrects this deficiency.

In 23 terse well-written chapters, methods of assessing consciousness, anaesthetic depth and awareness are discussed. The techniques described vary from the most clinical to the most technologically sophisticated including EEG, processed EEG, EMG and evoked responses amongst others. In addition, several chapters describe awareness under general anaesthesia from British and American medicolegal perspectives. To echo the importance of this topic, the book ends with a poignant appendix in which 27 patients describe their personal accounts of awareness.

The plethora of technologies available to detect consciousness shows that no "gold standard" exists; however, the individual chapters give an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of each modality.

In summary, this book belongs in the libraries of all anaesthesia departments. As a reference, it will be useful to professionals involved in electrophysiology, psychology and law. The appendix should be read by all practising anaesthesia.

C.J. Eagle
Calgary, Alberta