

Book Reviews

W. R. HESS: **Hypothalamus und Thalamus**. Experimental-Dokumente; 2nd edition. Thieme, Stuttgart 1968. VIII+78 p., 207 fig., Price: DM 48.-.

This book, first printed in 1956, has become one of the standard works in neurophysiology. It has been rearranged and extended in this second edition. The author reports exclusively his personal experimental observations obtained of the brain stem of cats by the exploration with fine electrodes stereotactically placed. Using this method it was possible to correlate vegetative, motor and instinctive reactions with circumscribed stimulations and coagulations of different regions. It is shown by the author that the respiratory and circulatory centers of the medulla oblongata are subordinated in their regulation of these vital functions to a mesencephalic-diencephalic area. Circumscribed stimulation of a region mainly in the hypothalamus caused sniffing, licking, panting, vomiting and defecation. Movements of the head, body and extremities in any direction could be evoked by thalamic and subthalamic stimulations. Centers for optical deviations in the vertical plane were found in the tectum opticum and for the horizontal deviations in the area cingularis. Stimulation of the anterior hypothalamus caused atony, coagulation of the posterior part of this structure was followed by adynamia. Stimulation latero-basal of the massa intermedia caused a reversible sleep. In the caudal parts of the hypothalamus reactions of rage and aggression were repeatedly evoked, and in the immediate neighborhood the 'fressreflex' was stimulated.

Essential results from electrophysiologic experiments accumulated during 25 years are summarized in this book. A variety of photographs from films and brain sections are added.

A. LEVY, *Basel*

E. GIBBELS: **Die Thalidomid-Polyneuritis**. Thieme, Stuttgart 1968. VIII+140 pp., 4 fig., 47 tables. Size: 15.5×23 cm. Bound in paper boards. Price: DM 27.-.

This monograph gives a very detailed description of 114 cases of sensory or predominantly sensory polyneuropathy observed in the Neurological Clinic of Cologne and attributed to thalidomid medication. The author is convinced that the clinical symptomatology is unique enough to allow the diagnosis without much clinical and laboratory investigation. The most characteristic symptoms according to this author are (1) the almost purely sensory deficits over long periods of time, (2) paresthesias of deep sensation and (3) the progression or failure of remission of complaints after withdrawal of the drug. However, none of this criterion was present in every case and a variety of other symptoms such as cramps, restless legs, fasciculations, abnormally brisk reflexes, sensory loss in the sacral dermatomes, frigidity, constipation, etc. were attributed to thalidomid without hesitation. Only in a minority of patients was a thorough clinical check-up performed. In none of these cases did the polyneuropathy develop under strict clinical control. The severity of the symptoms did neither correlate with the total dose nor with the duration of the thalidomid medication. Animal experiments in different institutes were largely unseccessful in producing polyneuropathy.

The monograph is therefore open to many questions and remarks, although it contains a wealth of informations.

H. E. KAESER, *Basel*

M. KLINGLER: **Das Schädelhirntrauma**. 2nd, rev. edition. Thieme, Stuttgart 1968. VIII + 172 p., 23 fig. Size: 15.5×23.5 cm. Bound in paper boards. Price: DM 25.–.

Most of the steadily increasing number of patients with head injuries are referred to regional hospitals without a neurosurgical unit. It is therefore of utmost importance that every surgeon be familiar with head injuries, the diagnosis of brain compression and the indications and technical problems of emergency operations. The first edition of this book 'Das Schädelhirntrauma' was an immediate success. It is concise, well written and gives clear-cut answers to the numerous questions in the management of head injuries. The meticulous observation of a few clinical symptoms is still the essential point, echoencephalography and arteriography are often necessary to confirm the diagnosis. The technique of emergency operations and the postoperative care are the next points. The manual is based on a large personal experience both as neurosurgeon and as a neurologist. The practical problems and illustrative personal observations make out most of the 170 pages of this monograph which serves general surgeons as well neurosurgeons and neurologists. Only a few selected references conclude the book.

The second edition includes new developments and methods such as echoencephalography. The original character of the booklet is unchanged. Doubtlessly, it will continue to be the most consulted manual on brain injuries in the German speaking world.

H. E. KAESER, *Basel*

Humangenetik. Vol. 1, Part 1. Ein kurzes Handbuch in fünf Bänden. Edited by P. E. BECKER, Göttingen. Thieme, Stuttgart 1968. XVI + 536 p., 259 fig. with 454 detailed reproductions, 116 tables. Size: 17,5×26 cm. Cloth cover. Price: DM 198.– (Subscription price: DM 158.40).

Originally conceived a 'short handbook' some 10 years ago this oeuvre is growing into a comprehensive handbook of 5 volumes each being divided into 2 or 3 separate parts. The different parts appear successively at longer intervals so that the handbook bears a priori a historical character. In spite of this fact it is an extremely valuable handbook gathering a wealth of information on human genetics and including also very rare diseases like hereditary inborn errors of metabolism. – The present first part of the first volume contains short chapters on the history of human genetics, the derivations of human species and on human chromosomes. They serve as an introduction to the methods of genetics for those who are no specialists in this field. The following chapters are devoted to the inheritance of body growth, constitution, sex development and the acceleration problems. In the last chapter JÜRGENS-KIEL describes all aspects of the inheritance of the skin and its appendixes. Like the first part of the fifth volume on the inheritance of neurological diseases this new volume is of great interest not only to all scientists working in the fields of human pathology, anthropology, derivation of species and on chromosomes, but particularly also to all clinicians.

It is to be hoped that the handbook will be complete within a few years so that it may serve as a guide and reference book covering almost all the aspects of genetics in human physiology and pathology. Further developments will be treated in 'Advances in Human Genetics' (Fortschritte der allgemeinen und klinischen Humangenetik).

H. E. KAESER, *Basel*