Book reviews

Ultrastructural Study of the Human Diseased Peripheral Nerve. 2nd ed. C Vital, J-M Vallat. (Pp 290; \$58.) Elsevier. 1987. ISBN 0 444 0136 6.

First published in 1980, this edition gives a full account of the ultrastructural features of biopsied human cutaneous nerve. It is based on the large experience of the authors who have systematically studied the morphology of peripheral nerve and its clinicopathological correlations.

The book is divided into three sections. The first comprises four chapters that detail the electron microscopic features of normal peripheral nerve, techniques, and morphometry. The second is made up of two chapters that give an excellent account of the pathological changes occurring in both nerves and interstitium, and the third is made up of 12 chapters which describe in detail the changes found in particular categories of disease, such as the paraneoplastic and inherited neuropathies.

This is undoubtedly a comprehensive compendium comprising 267 electron micrographs, a concise text, a good index, and over 890 references. It is noted, however, that there are very few references quoted after 1985.

This is a first class bench book and is therefore strongly recommended to all departments that provide a diagnostic service in peripheral nerves. It is beautifully illustrated, well written, and priced modestly.

DI GRAHAM

Portraits from Memory. Sir James Howie. The Memoir Club. (Pp 164; £14.95.) British Medical Journal. 1988. ISBN 0-7279-0243-1.

I should like to thank Sir James for one of the most enjoyable and entertaining train journeys I have had for a long time. His well known vignettes, originally published in the *British Medical Journal*, are now collected together in a single volume with a few hitherto unpublished "portraits"—including one of himself.

The motley collection of characters is fascinating. There is an understandable bias towards pathologists, some of whose antics defy belief. Desmond Bagley would have been pleased to write the scene where Howie and Murgatroyd, attempting to prevent the spread of yellow fever to Egypt and India,

flew across Africa with an ice packed thermos containing 10 000 irreplaceable doses of vaccine. Their plane crashed into a wood. The starboard engine ploughed through the fuselage smashing the flask, but the ampoules inside were undamaged. So were the passengers, though the author may understandably have been put off flying. It was his first air trip.

Not all the sketches are of doctors. For example, there is Archie Craig, the cleric's cleric with a penchant for neologisms, and Cecilia Scott, the Glasgow fever hospital charge nurse who could diagnose "mizzles" before Koplik's spots appeared simply by the look of a child. She never qualified. She never married either, but was happy to confide that she had not been "neglected". Marvellous stuff, all of it. The two hours from St Pancras have never passed so quickly.

JS LILLEYMAN

Boyd's Introduction to the Study of Disease. 10th ed. Huntington Sheldon. (Pp 702; £22.35.) Lea and Febiger (UK) Ltd. 1988. ISBN 0-8121-1157-5.

The earlier editions of this book were popular with medical students of my generation because of the racy style of the late William Boyd. Dr Sheldon has made strenuous attempts to update the book so that it will still be relevant, but he has not made clear in the preface the audience for which it is intended. The balance between general pathology (333 pages) and systemic pathology (326 pages) would seem inappropriate to medical students.

The old lady (now in her 50th year) has had her "make-up" applied skilfully by Dr Sheldon, but the ravages of her age show through—what other textbook of pathology has so many poor, poorly informative illustrations lacking tonal contrast (Fig 10-6 p 272) and where else would one read such purple prose—"When the heat of Arabia comes out like a drawn sword and strikes you . . ." (p 32), an account of the diagnostic methods practised by a Tibetan healer (p 94), or a short essay on terminal care (p 674). I regret that I cannot recommend that my students should purchase this book.

J SWANSON BECK

Female Genital Cancer. Ed SB Gusberg, HM Shingleton, G Deppe. (Pp 857; £95.) Churchill Livingstone. 1988. ISBN 0-443-08525-0.

This book is one of several recently pub-

lished volumes devoted to gynaecological oncology as a subdiscipline, a speciality which is relatively new in the United Kingdom and regrettably restricted to only a few centres. It embraces a wide diversity of topics, including epidemiology, immunology, surgery, radiotherapy, psychology etc. The pathological aspects of female genital cancer therefore comprise only one part of the text and exemplify the maxim that pathology is best written by pathologists. Dr Dwayne Lawrence's contributions are admirable but the remaining pathology is on the whole weak.

Breast cancer comes within the influence of the gynaecological oncologist in the United States (though not, conventionally, in this country). For this reason it is included here, albeit perfunctorily. Even if the histopathology of invasive mammary neoplasia is not particularly challenging, it surely deserves more than half a page.

Neither specialist gynaecological or general pathologist will find this book of much value, because it is intended primarily for clinicians and there are many others that deal much better with viruses and cancer, molecular biology and immunology. The pathologist with a special interest might find it of value to dip into from time to time to gain further insight into clinical matters but he or she should borrow a copy and not spend £95 for the privilege.

M WELLS

Lung Tumors. Lung, Mediastinum, Pleura, and Chest Wall. Ed B Hoogstraten, BJ Addis, HH Hansen, N Martini, SG Spiro. UICC International Union against Cancer. Current Treatment of Cancer. (Pp 272; 100 figs.; soft cover DM 98.) Springer. 1988. ISBN 3-540-16920-2.

This handy softback book covers its subject comprehensively and provides easy reading. Its subject is tumours of the lung, mediastinum, pleura, and chest wall, and in relation to these it covers epidemiology, aetiology, biology, pathology, early detection, clinical features, diagnostic procedures, staging, prognosis, treatment, and outcome. Apart from a chapter on the Sloan-Kettering experience, these aspects of lung tumours are dealt with exclusively by workers at the Brompton and Marsden hospitals in London and the Finsen Institute in Copenhagen. Three chapters are the result of combining manuscripts from London that match ones from Copenhagen. In view of this it is