

work includes detailed neuropathological studies, and these emphasize the separateness of the effect of status epilepticus from brain damage due to encephalitis and trauma.

The diagnosis of temporal lobe epilepsy may be difficult because of the brevity of the attacks, and in the 100 children many had been mis-diagnosed before investigation as suffering from petit mal. The understanding that behavioural disturbances such as hyperkinesia, rage, and learning difficulties may be expressions of temporal lobe epilepsy is important, and the authors analyse these carefully and helpfully in relation to their subject. Their data is clearly, if not statistically, presented, and the frequent case-histories are useful aids to the understanding of the problems which the authors have written about so well.

The analysis of the 100 biographies shows that temporal lobe epilepsy is a crippling and potentially mortal disorder. In only two of the patients was it due to genetic disease, namely phenylketonuria and tuberosc sclerosis, and the point is made that the recognition of such genetic disease may allow prevention (by counselling) of the epilepsy and its associated defects of mentality, personality and work ability. Other aetiological factors were birth injuries, intracranial infections and febrile convulsions, and stress is made of the importance of attempting to lower their incidence, as well as recognizing the possibility that they may lead to temporal lobe epilepsy and taking prophylactic measures against this.

MILO KEYNES

PHYSIOLOGY

Kare, Morley R. and Mailler, Owen (Editors). *The Chemical Senses and Nutrition.* With a Bibliography on The Sense of Taste by **Rose Marie Pangborn** and **Ida M. Trabue.** Baltimore, 1967. Johns Hopkins. Pp. 495. Price 119s.

THIS MONUMENTAL VOLUME contains the contributions of thirty-four zoologists, neurophysiologists, psychologists, clinicians, entomologists and geneticists at a symposium, held at Cornell in 1966 and sponsored by the Nutrition Foundation. To the reviewer's knowledge this book is the first full-scale attempt to integrate the existing knowledge of taste and its associated perceptions with the science of nutrition and thus to begin the construction of flow diagrams, which indicate the numerous components of short- and long-term interactions and regulations between feeding behaviour and diet.

Each group of papers was introduced by a chairman and summarized by a critic and each paper was supposed to deal with one or several of the following topics: the physiology and functions of taste; the interactions of the chemical senses with metabolism, nutrition and the physiology of the organism concerned; the limitations by experience on chemical sensory information; the interaction of the chemical senses and receptors in the control of food and liquid intake.

This aim has to some extent been achieved. However highly specialist terminology and even jargon have not been entirely eliminated by the editors, as was their declared aim. Thus in the excellent chapter on the genetics of taste perception repeated mention is made of "Gaussian substances" meaning substances—practically all sapid substances, the taste thresholds for which are according to some scale about normally distributed in the population.

The 96 pages of bibliography on the sense of taste contain titles of about 3,500 books and papers published between 1566 and 1966. Though it is a mine of information, it does not contain all references listed after the individual papers in the book. Thus these lists must be additionally consulted by the reader.

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