

the posterior part of the corpus callosum, each occipital lobe concerning itself with the contralateral visual field.

The monograph contains several new ideas and is illustrated with elaborately studied clinical cases. It is of more than usual interest both to the neurologist and to the ophthalmologist.

STEWART DUKE-ELDER.

INTERNATIONAL GOITRE CONFERENCE

Advances in Thyroid Research. Transactions of the Fourth International Goitre Conference, London, July, 1960. General Editor: Rosalind Pitt-Rivers. (Pp. 537+xxvii; illustrated. £6 6s.) Oxford, London, New York, Paris: Symposium Publications Division, Pergamon Press. 1961.

Though diverse views may be held about the desirability of publishing original material in the form of conference reports instead of in the regular periodicals it appears that the practice (which received so much impetus during the second world war) has come to stay. Its great advantage to the reader is that it collects into one convenient volume a great deal of up-to-date research in a given field; this is outstandingly true of the present volume.

Lest the price of this book be considered high it should be borne in mind that it is now 22 years since the last international goitre conference and that the present report contains 95 papers on a very wide range of subjects of interest in thyroid research. Though some of these are technical or biochemical in emphasis many will have a direct clinical appeal. Examples of such papers—to pick a few at random—are those on “Myocardial Infarction in Thyrotoxicosis,” “The Differential Diagnosis of Thyrotoxic Myopathy and Myasthenia Gravis,” “The Value of the Ankle Jerk in Diagnosing Hypothyroidism,” “Tracheal Stenosis following Thyroidectomy,” and “The Occurrence of Leukaemia Following Radioiodine Therapy.”

The majority are more technical in content and will appeal especially to those interested in the growing front of knowledge in thyroid research. Many deal with the intermediate metabolism of the thyroid in animals as well as in human disease. Nearly all the papers are commendably brief and concise in presentation, and the great majority are also provided with a generous list of recent and well-chosen references.

In his introductory remarks Sir Charles Harington appeals for a critical refusal to accept the facile explanation of results. In such a context it is a pity therefore that no reports are included of the discussion of any of these papers, for this surely was one main purpose of the conference. But to include them would have increased not only the bulk but also no doubt the price of the book. The volume is very well produced with clear type and on good paper. It will prove an essential reference volume for all engaged in thyroid research, and clinicians who are not engaged in research will also find in its pages a great deal of lively clinical interest.

C. L. COPE.

MYASTHENIA GRAVIS

Thymectomy for Myasthenia Gravis. A Record of Experiences at the Massachusetts General Hospital. By Henry R. Viets, M.D., and Robert S. Schwab, M.D. (Pp. 143+ xv; illustrated. 56s.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1960.

The authors of this short monograph, writing from the Myasthenia Gravis Clinic of the Massachusetts General Hospital, have an extensive experience of the disease, as they have treated some 500 cases since 1935. The

main purpose of the book is to evaluate the results of thymectomy—which has been performed in 139 of their patients, 26 of them having thymomas—and to compare these results as objectively as possible with those obtained in patients of similar age and sex and with similar duration and severity of disease who have been treated medically. They consider that in women under 40, in whom the disease is moderate to severe, thymectomy is of undoubted value in precipitating a remission; in men the conclusions are less certain, but there are some indications that it is of value. When there is radiological evidence of a thymoma the authors agree with Keynes that irradiation is the right treatment in the first instance, usually followed by removal of the tumour and thymus. There are good discussions by Dr. Sweet and Dr. Vanderveen of the technique of the operation and of the anaesthetic problems involved. The authors emphasize the importance of the post-operative management, but, strangely, do not mention the importance of breathing exercises and physiotherapy for the chest, which are of major value. They are possibly unduly worried about the danger of a cholinergic crisis due to over-dosage in the post-operative period. The monograph also contains a short account of the clinical features of the disease, an excellent concise account of the thymic pathology by Dr. Castleman, an account of the radiology by Dr. Robbins, and an admirable historical introduction by the senior author. It is particularly fitting that this excellent book is dedicated to Dr. Mary Walker and Dr. Blalock, the pioneers in the medical and surgical management of this disease.

J. W. ALDREN TURNER.

CONTROVERSIAL BORDERLAND

Ciba Foundation Study Group No. 6. *Metabolic Effects of Adrenal Hormones in Honour of Professor G. W. Thorn.* Editors for the Ciba Foundation: G. E. W. Wolstenholme, O.B.E., M.A., M.B., M.R.C.P., and Maeve O'Connor. (Pp. 109+viii; illustrated. 12s. 6d.) London: J. and A. Churchill Ltd. 1960.

This small volume contains a detailed account of a recent Ciba Foundation Study Group meeting which was held in honour of Professor G. W. Thorn. The topics discussed and the opening speakers were “Actions of Cortisol and Related Compounds on Carbohydrate and Protein Metabolism” (C. N. H. Long, O. K. Smith, and E. G. Fry); “The Role of Adrenal Steroids in the Regulation of Hepatic Metabolism” (J. Ashmore); “The Adrenal Gland and *in vitro* Protein Synthesis” (A. Korner); “Action of Cortisol on Trapping of Amino Acids by the Liver” (H. N. Christensen); “Effect of Adrenal Hormones upon Adipose Tissue” (A. E. Renold, G. F. Cahill, Jr., B. Leboeuf, and M. G. Herrera).

The symposium and this account of it are a fitting tribute to a distinguished research worker in the field of adrenal physiology. The original papers contain a wealth of information and the detailed reports of the subsequent discussions add greatly to the value of the book. Investigators who are interested in the metabolic effects of the adrenocortical hormones will certainly wish to have this book in their libraries. It can also be recommended to other biochemically inclined readers who wish to have a readable and critical account of some of the recent fundamental work in a controversial borderland between biochemistry and endocrinology.

R. W. E. WATTS.