

this book is extensive, particularly from the United States and from East and West Europe.

LS ILLIS

**The Year Book of Psychiatry and Applied Mental Health**, (pp 409 £29.50) Year Book Medical Publishers: Chicago 1979.

The current volume of this well-known series provides synopses of a larger number of papers on many topics in the general fields of psychiatry and related disciplines. Comments, sometimes on individual papers and sometimes on groups of papers, are made by the six editors, all of them senior and distinguished American research workers. Papers have been drawn from a wide range of English-language journals, but none from foreign-language journals.

The editors have had to be selective and in general they have chosen important or stimulating papers. There is good coverage of neurophysiology, biochemistry and pharmacology, child psychiatry, clinical psychiatry (with particular reference to conceptual models in psychiatry and to clinical aspects of schizophrenia), psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy. Some important topics get little more than token representation, while there is a very long section, including some not very important papers, on community psychiatry.

Within these limitations—and it would take a much larger volume to provide adequate representation of all the topics listed in the index—the book is a valuable source of easy reference to papers in psychiatry published in English up to Spring 1978. It can be warmly recommended to medical librarians.

JL GIBBONS

**Sphingolipidoses and Allied Disorders, Volume 1** M Adachi, L Schneck, B Volk, eds. (pp 260 £16.50) Churchill Livingstone, London, 1979.

The area of genetically-determined storage diseases of the nervous system is one of ever-increasing complexity in which new entities and variants of previously described disorders continue to be recognised. This small volume in

the Annual Research Reviews series under the editorship of DF Horrobin is concerned specifically with those disorders in which storage of sphingolipids is the principal change in the nervous system, and consists of twelve chapters dealing with the gangliosidoses, Gaucher's disease, Fabry's disease, Krabbe's disease, metachromatic leukodystrophy, lactosyl ceramidosis, Niemann-Pick disease, Wolman's disease, Refsum's syndrome, fucosidosis, mucopolipidosis and the sea-blue histiocyte syndrome. It is an unillustrated volume which first summarises existing knowledge on clinical, biochemical and pathological aspects of these disorders and then reviews recent advances made over the past five years or so. It is an exhaustive review with over one thousand references, which covers all aspects of these disorders including biochemical diagnosis, prenatal diagnosis, detection of the heterozygous state, and attempts at parenteral enzyme replacement therapy which appear to hold some promise in at least some of these conditions.

This book will be of interest to those who are directly involved in the field of inherited metabolic diseases but is unlikely to be of great value to the adult neurologist other than for occasional reference.

FL MASTAGLIA

**Mechanisms of Pain and Analgesic Compounds** (Miles International Symposium Series, 11th) Edited by Roland F Beers, Jr, and Edward G Bassett (pp 520, \$51.35), Raven Press, New York, 1979.

This book records the proceedings of a 3-day conference held at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in 1978. It comprises 40 contributions divided into sections: Recent clinical contributions to the understanding of mechanisms of pain and pain relief, an overview of the neurological significance of pain, endogenous substances having analgesic action, peripheral mechanisms of pain and analgesia, mechanisms of opioid analgesia and dependence, and new leads for the development of analgesics. Each contribution concludes with an extensive list of references, and each section with a critical discussion.

The title of the book is perhaps misleading. The book deals predominantly with theoretical issues, and clinicians working in a pain clinic will not find here a consideration of mechanisms for causalgia, phantom pains, referred pains, and other equally perplexing, painful conditions. Given, however, that this is a book mainly dealing with selected and theoretical aspects, it has many distinguished contributors provide articles mostly of a review nature—both important and timely in this rapidly advancing field. To the reviewer, particularly interesting contributions included Long's article on "Neuroaugmentation Procedures for Chronic Pain" and Goldstein's on "Endorphins and Pain: A Critical Review", but there is a wealth of information to be found in this book which, as the cover suggests, will certainly appeal to those working in diverse but related fields.

The book is well produced, with good index, and is reasonably priced. It represents a very useful and up-to-date review of much of the theoretical basis of pain and pain-relieving drugs.

GD SCHWARTZ

**The Concept of a Blood-Brain Barrier** By Michael Bradbury (pp 465, illustrated; £22.00) Chichester: John Wiley, 1979.

The blood-brain barrier has long been a fruitful source of confusion to basic scientists, clinicians, and examination candidates alike. Professor Bradbury, a major figure in barrier research, has written an excellent review of this intractable subject. He locates the barrier fairly and squarely in the cerebral capillary endothelium, where there is now respectable anatomical and experimental evidence to confirm it. After reviewing the precise diffusion characteristics of the major metabolites and drug groups, he concludes that the primary function of the barrier is to maintain cerebral homeostasis, rather than to exclude specific exogenous endogenous toxins. The weakest part of the book is unfortunately the first chapter, where the hopeful will no doubt begin their search for the fundamental truths. Although it contains first rate material, it seems confused, hazardous, and ineffectively illustrated,