Pain, Meaning and Management Edited by W Lynn Smith, Harold Merskey, and Steven C Gross (pp 170; £9.95) London: MTP Press, 1980.

The authors hope that the reader of this book "will be continually reminded of the mind/body interaction involved in pain states." They have succeeded in their task reasonably well but in a book of this size many important features of pain can be mentioned only in passing. The constraints of size make this inevitable. The various chapters give a brief account of present attitudes to pain and pain relief from authors with up-to-date knowledge of their subject. Each of them could have expanded his chapter into a much longer monograph with good effect and perhaps will do so in the future. In the present volume discussion on the problems of, precepts for, and suggestions on, actual treatment are limited. The style of the book is set by the first chapter—a joint effort by four authors who point out that the anomalies which exist between clinicians' observations of patients in pain and the findings of research workers into pain represents an important scientific problem. They emphasise differences between acute and chronic pain, and propose that pain is a central perception and not a sensation. This is not new and stems perhaps from research into pain pathways and transmission mostly being carried out on animal "models" with relatively little being done in the human being except in the psychology and psychiatry of pain. Hence this book, which attempts to interpret this material into clinical use.

The second chapter is a rather mechanical account of opioid neuropeptides and again this may be due to there being four joint authors. Chapter three runs through some of the radiological processes available to resolve the origins of spinal pain and its author was very constrained by space since for instance one page for "failure of disc surgery" plus "the failed back surgery syndrome" seem inadequate. I feel it should have been either expanded or left out. Chapters four and seven by Professor Merskey are delightful. Chapter four, only four pages long including references, is on "The nature of pain" and re-emphasises that pain is an experience and is what the patient says it is. Chapter seven "The psychological and psy-

chiatric aspect of pain control" is a "gem" full of common sense and needs to be read a number of times to get full value as it is very succinct. Chapters five and six on "assessment of pain" and "clinical pharmacology of pain" fit very well between Professor Merskey's chapters and re-emphasise the importance of these two subjects. The sentence "the role of precise diagnosis cannot be overstated" shows the clinical orientation of the authors and could well be printed at intervals throughout this and many other books on pain relief. Chapter eight on "predicting surgical outcome" is really a short preliminary paper while chapters eight and nine respectively on "Child pain" and "Pain and the aged patient" are extremely valuable. It is good to see a chapter on controlling child pain as it seems agreed by many clinicians that the young child does not feel pain very much. The chapter points out that while paediatric pain is present and is real, it is dealt with differently from adult pain and goes on to discuss why this should be so.

Most books on pain and pain relief adopt a stance towards giving drugs, or nerve blocking methods, or psychological methods, or a mixture of these. This is one of the few books which tries to give something more than a purely psychological approach. It does not succeed entirely but it sets out to provide a more global understanding of pain and the patient with pain and goes some of the way to do this. At its price it is good value especially for the practitioner or student who wants a synopsis to bring them up to date on modern thought on the meaning and management of pain, particularly from the psychological aspect. It will be a useful addition to the residents library.

S LIPTON

Review of Neuroscience By Ben Pansky and Delmas J Allen (pp 622; \$18.95) New York: Macmillan Publishing Co Inc, 1980.

I approached this book with disfavour and prejudice. A "Review of Neuroscience" weighing only 1.3 kg and in 622 pages indeed! Prejudice hardened when reading in the preface that the book was written for "the medical student, dental student, physician, surgeon, physical therapist, nurse and others." On closer acquaintance the book be-

comes a sheer delight and an object lesson to those of us who are not very good at extracting the essential points from complex matters. The book should have had a less ambitious title (? "Summary" ? "Overview") and should have been dedicated simply to anyone who wants an up-to-date summary of the fundamentals of neuroscience and who especially needs visual representation of the subject matter.

Neuro-anatomy (developmental, gross and microscopic), neurophysiology, neurology (malformations, degenerative disease, infections and much else), neurosurgery—all are summarised in a masterly fashion without superfluous words and without, as far as I could determine, any errors of fact. On every right-hand page are illustrations (un-numbered but probably totalling over 2000) which are usually beautiful line drawings mostly by Professor Pansky who clearly has inherited this skill from an older school of anatomists. In addition there are photographs of brain slices, histological sections, scanning EM photographs together with computed tomography scans.

For nurses working with patients having neurological and neurosurgical disorders, and for medical students this book will be extremely welcome. Even those who have tucked themselves away in some remote corner of the world of neuroscience may welcome the opportunity to browse.

KENNETH TILL

Thomas Willis's Oxford Lectures Edited by Kenneth Dewhurst (pp 181; £9.00; limited to 750 copies) Oxford: Sandford Publications, 1980.

Thomas Willis was appointed Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy at Oxford in 1660 at the age of 39 years. He put together a series of some 34 lectures over the next three years. Most were worded in Latin handwriting by John Locke, whose notebooks form our major source of this material. Others were worded by Richard Lower. As Kenneth Dewhurst points out in his introduction, "Any series of seventeenth century medical lectures would have some historical interest, but here we are concerned with those of Thomas Willis who laid down the foundations of neurology in Restoration Oxford." Dewhurst has produced a volume to delight

us all. In the first 50 pages he describes the life and works of this remarkable physician and gives the background to the Sedleian Professorship. The lectures themselves are contained within the next 100 pages, in which Dewhurst's original translations are amplified by copious footnotes. These lectures, which are a delight to read, formed the basis of many of Willis's subsequent books, which exerted such a profound impact on the development of neurological psychiatry. The volume is beautifully produced and will give endless pleasure. A must for all neurological libraries and an excellent present for the neurological tyro.

CD MARSDEN

Organic Psychiatry By William Alwyn Lishman (pp 967; £14.50) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1980.

This reprinted edition of Alwyn Lishman's encyclopaedic book, first published in 1978, will be welcomed by those unfortunate people who were unable to afford the high price of the first edition and can now purchase this paperback print at a more reasonable cost. That is not to say that the first edition was not worth every penny of the price, only that books such as this command such a large audience, and that high prices preclude many who would perhaps make the most use of them, for example students, from owning them. This soft-back version, with nearly 900 pages of well-reviewed literature on organic psychiatry, is a bargain that those interested will find hard to refuse.

Apart from the clearing up of some minor spelling mistakes, the printing is as the first edition, in which Professor Lishman examines psychiatric symptomatology associated with various organic disorders, especially those of the central nervous system. Part 1 is devoted to clinical assessment and differential diagnosis of psychopathology with special reference to the detection of organic brain syndromes, and discussion of clinical presentations arising either from generalised organic brain disease, or those which have regional affiliations based on localised pathology.

The second part is devoted to specific disorders covering, in addition to such neuropsychiatric topics as head injury, epilepsy and cerebrovascular accidents,

the psychopathology associated with endocrine diseases, metabolic disorders, vitamin deficiencies and toxic disorders. Of all these chapters, those on head injury, and dementia, stand out for their particularly well-reviewed and clear presentation of the available information in these fields. Available, that is, until the mid-1970s when, presumably the writing of the book was complete. The fact that in the late 70s and early 1980s some interesting new advancements in several of the fields discussed by Professor Lishman have occurred, and of course are not included in this book, in no way reflects on the quality of that produced, merely that the field of organic psychiatry is progressing rapidly. The role of neurotransmitters generally in the pathogenesis of psychiatric symptoms is poorly covered, monoamines for example not being mentioned in the index.

The really great virtue of this book is its readability. There are few texts of this size that can be read from cover to cover, but the easy style and lively presentation of data that Professor Lishman has produced make its digestion comfortable.

MICHAEL TRIMBLE

Childhood Neurological Problems: A Textbook for Health Care Professionals By Doris A Trauner (pp 150; £15.25) London: Year Book Med Pub, 1980.

Dr Trauner, an Assistant Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics, has subtitled her book "A Textbook for Health Care Professionals," with a broad spectrum of readers in mind among nurses, physiotherapists, "speech pathologists" and anyone who deals with children with problems involving the nervous system. I would agree with Dr Nyhan who, in a foreword, expresses the belief that it will also be useful to physicians in family practice and paediatrics. Some of the chapters could be read with benefit also by teachers, whose fears of epilepsy, cerebral palsy and other neurological problems stem largely from ignorance. To write a successful book for this readership is not easy with the risks of brevity and oversimplification producing a misleading picture of complex disorders, but this has been skilfully avoided with emphasis on principles and brief but generally adequate details of specific

disorders. The first two chapters, on "Normal Neurologic Development" and "The Neurologic Examination" set the scene and serve as an introduction to the following twelve chapters devoted to particular categories of disorder. I wish that the importance of accurate and regular measurement and recording of the head circumference had been stressed more strongly, since this is a vital statistic all too often neglected. The book is written basically for an American non-medical readership, but there are few changes needed for readers on this side of the Atlantic. Hyperactivity syndromes and learning disabilities, which occupy a higher proportion of the time of Paediatric Neurologists and Paediatricians in North America than in Britain, are dealt with in a pragmatic and helpful way. Belief in the need for a neurological opinion "to rule out neurological problems" in children with learning disorders is correctly regarded as a misleading concept widely held in educational circles. The value of routine electroencephalography in children with learning disabilities also receives—deservedly—short shrift.

I hope this book will be widely read by those at whom it is aimed and, if it is dipped into by some of their medical colleagues for whom the subject is *terra incognita*, so much the better.

FM BRETT

Persistent Pain, Vol II Edited by Sampson Lipton (pp 398; \$49.50) London: Academic Press Inc 1980.

This is the second volume to be issued under the above title, the first having been published in 1977. In both volumes chapters are contributed by experts in various fields. In Volume 1, the range offered covered many of the techniques which are used in treatment in Pain Clinics, and outlined the anatomy and physiology of pain. This was excellent, and still provides a valuable source for reference. In Volume II, some subjects such as acupuncture have been repeated, and others, such as dental, oral and facial pain, have been expanded. The appearance of a subject in Volume I does not, therefore, exclude it from Volume II. However, the process is not entirely one of updating and, unfortunately, some new chapters have not been written entirely from the