quality and usefulness; the good chapters are very good, the production of the book is excellent, and the price reasonable. Even if only a small number of doctors will want to purchase their own copy, it should be readily available for consultation by those treating patients with pain.

GD SCHOTT

Current Status of Modern Therapy Vol 8. Disorders of Movement Edited by André Barbeau (pp 216; £14.95) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1981.

In the past two decades there have been many intriguing and at times seemingly contradictory contributions to the field of movement disorders—an area of common and compelling interest to both neurologists and psychiatrists—and there has been a pressing clinical need for an authoritative statement. This is the purpose of the present volume. The historical scene is vividly set by André Barbeau whose scholarly survey embraces the fascinating mediaeval epidemics, the evolution of classical terminology and the judicious assessment of controversial, rare clinical entities. Only he who is confident about the diagnostic criteria of Dubini's electric chorea, Jumping Frenchmen of Maine, Latah of Malaysia and Myriachit of Siberia can afford to neglect this chapter.

Throughout the contributions concerning the pathophysiology and treatment of the dyskinesias, where critical reference is made to the salient papers on neurophysiology and experimental neuropharmacology one can detect a refreshing and invigorating editorial breeze of intellectual honesty. Thus in the treatment sections there is a marked absence of the irritating ambiguities of former handbooks such as "worthy of trial" or "may be helpful." It is categorically stated when there is no effective treatment; when side-effects outweigh limited benefit there is a firm directive. The decisive advances in the medical and surgical understanding of myoclonus, chorea, athetosis, torsion dystonia, tardive dyskinesias, essential tremor, Wilson's disease as well as Parkinsonism are succinctly summarised sifting reliable facts from doubt, speculation and groundless enthusiasm. This is a most welcome and successful book. It con-

cisely achieves its purpose of presenting the state of the art and it is warmly recommended to all clinicians.

GERALD STERN

The Physiology of Peripheral Nerve Disease Edited by Austin J Sumner (pp 504; £20.00) London: WB Saunders, 1980.

Clinical neurophysiologists will welcome this excellent account of the normal and abnormal physiology of peripheral nerves from 14 experts on different aspects. The introductory chapter on excitation and conduction in nerve is excellent though, surprisingly, the insight into membranes and their electrical properties has had surprisingly little practical application in electrodiagnosis (accommodation is only mentioned with respect to motoneurons). The book is not a primer of peripheral neurophysiology—the regulation of recruitment and firing frequency are not discussed—but in the restricted field of peripheral nerve disease it is comprehensive and accurate. The recent spate of information about demyelination is slowing down and this is an appropriate time for reviewing the position. A future edition might give more consideration to the other sheaths protecting the microenvironment of nerve. The toxicological evidence that peripheral nerves may be damaged at different points is noted. Certainly the grouping of neuropathies into segmental demyelination, "dying back," and Wallerian degeneration types is too simple and it is clear that the axonal neuropathies will figure more prominently in a later edition. The editor provides a succinct account of his fine work on experimental axonal neuropathies but does not discuss the less direct methods available for human studies. Motor unit counting, despite its limitations, is surely worth mentioning. Despite its orientation to the experimental preparation, the book will be referred to constantly by the clinical neurophysiologists as the chapters range widely over the relevant area. They include: excitation and conduction in nerve (Barchi), cutaneous receptors (McIntyre), mammalian muscle spindles (Kennedy and colleagues), motor units in mammalian muscle (Burke), trophic effects of nerve on muscle (Harris), axoplasmic transport (Plesure), neuro-

muscular transmission (Pickett), demyelination (McDonald), acute compression block and entrapment neuropathy (Gilliat), axonal polyneuropathies (Sumner), autonomic nervous system (McLeod), and a clinical view of neuromuscular electrophysiology (Asbury).

The allocation of space is good and the authors have written clearly and concisely in this well conceived, produced and edited book.

JA SIMPSON

Molecular Neurobiology By Gordon Guroff (pp 571; SFr 106.00) New York: Marcel Dekker Inc, 1980.

The title of this book recognises the need neuroscientists have to communicate beyond their immediate specialty, but the text hardly does justice to the broad concept of molecular neurobiology. Dr Guroff is a biochemist and, except for a short introductory chapter on neurocytology, he rarely ventures from the biochemist's brief. The book consists of 26 chapters divided unequally into three sections entitled "Biochemical Cytology of Nerve and Brain," "Metabolism and Function" and "Chemical Physiology of Nerve and Brain." The major section on metabolism consists largely of a description of general brain biochemistry—carbohydrates, amino acids, proteins, lipids, nucleic acids etc. In other sections there are useful chapters on the myelin sheath, tissue culture, nerve growth factor, neuropharmacology and memory and learning. As a background text for students and clinicians, therefore, the book has considerable value. An attractive feature is the clinical slant given to certain chapters, particularly those concerned with amino acids and lipids. As well as useful tables summarising the major abnormalities in amino acid and lipid metabolism associated with neurological or psychiatric symptoms, there are short case histories illustrating the relevance of neurochemistry to clinical problems.

In other respects the book is disappointing. There are few references to work published after 1975. While ample descriptions are given of the synthesis and degradation of the well known neurotransmitters, modern knowledge of the basic molecular mechanisms of synaptic transmission only receives curs-