possible ways of classifying the evoked potentials. It is better to know a few and to understand their hierarchy — to have a schema rather than a list.

One very frustrating aspect of this book is its scarcity of numbers. I agree that each laboratory should gather its own normative data. Nevertheless, these values must then be compared to those already in the literature. The means and the variances of the measurements in one laboratory should be the same as those in another, or at least explainably different. Unfortunately, the book does not provide the reader with sample data for comparison. Nowhere in the book is there any mention that the normal interpeak latency between waves I and V of the brainstem auditory evoked potential in an adult is 4 ms or that the upper limit of normal for this interval is 4.5 or 4.6 ms. The reader will also search in vain for information about the incidence of abnormal visual evoked potentials in multiple sclerosis or the relationship between height and latency in the somatosensory evoked potentials.

Another disconcerting factor is the author's unwillingness to judge the literature. He refers to many papers with the format "disease A has been reported to cause abnormalities in evoked potential Z" without providing the reader with any idea whether he considers the findings valid or important. This is unfortunate, since for any student an ounce of opinion is often worth a pound of information.

This book is worth buying as a reference book for the laboratory. I would not recommend it as a textbook for the neurology resident who seeks to learn about evoked potentials.

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BASIC HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY. 1984. By D.F. Lindsley and J.E. Holmes. Published by Elsevier, New York. XVI + 368 pages.

"Billy had unconsciously permitted his pony to drop into a lazy walk". So begins the final chapter of this splendid text. All the topics previously dealt with are quickly reviewed while describing the behaviour of a cowboy in an extract from an Edgar Rice Burroughs western. It is a moonlit night, "and Billy's eyes are dark adapted — the rhodopsin content of his rods is at its highest level. The dim illumination decreases the sensory input to the pretectal area neurons responsible for the light reflex . . .". Here, then, is an unusual medical text with weighty content presented in an entertaining and an often witty format. Few textbooks are written to amuse but this one frequently stimulated me to laughter. There are limericks and one-liners, "the limbic system is more a state of mind than an anatomical structure". The book evolved from class handouts used in teaching over the last 15 years. Clearly, the authors know what helps students to master this difficult material.

The overall plan of the book is conventional: elementary anatomy is presented first followed by considerations of the brain's environment. This is succeeded by chapters on the basic cellular physiology of nerve, synapses and muscle. Systems neurophysiology is covered by chapters on somatosensory and motor functions, the special senses, the consciousness, autonomic and limbic systems, and finally the cortical association areas. Each chapter begins with a list of objectives and concludes with a series of review questions for which answers are provided. An extensive bibliography assists the motivated student to read further. Within each chapter, lists, summaries and tables are used extensively to reinforce important concepts or emphasize distinctions, for example, the sequence of events in excitation-contraction coupling. Frequent clinical examples are provided to introduce or illustrate physiological principles. The language of the text is refreshingly simple and straightforward. Clinical jargon is minimized but essential clinical terms are carefully defined. The numerous diagrams are helpful and most have been specially drawn or adapted from more complex illustrations in other sources.

This text is "basic" in both approach and level. It does not match the complexity of, say, Kandel and Schwartz's "Principles of Neural Science", nor does it provide sufficient clinical information to satisfy the M.D. curriculum requirements in neurology. In spite of these limitations, I recommend it highly to medical students as a stimulating and readable introduction to the neurosciences. It will be particularly valuable to those whose pre-medical education was not in the traditional basic sciences. I also recommend it to all involved in teaching medical students. This remarkable book provides us with a model for enlivening our own teaching.

Mark Bisby
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RECENT ADVANCES IN EPILEPSY. Volume 2. By T.A. Pedley and B.S. Meldrum. Published by Academic Press Canada. 344 pages. $73.00 Cdn.

This second volume of Recent Advances in Epilepsy reviews a wide range of basic and clinically relevant topics related to epilepsy.

The reviews are concise and the contributions are of even quality. Some interesting, relatively new topics are included such as cognitive effects of antiepileptic drugs. Helpful chapters on recent advances with benzodiazepines, therapeutic monitoring of antiepileptic drugs, and neonatal seizures also appear.

The volume is a virtual "must" for the epileptologist. The general neurologist would also find this valuable if his practise includes several epileptic patients. Pediatricians and internists may also find it useful. The basic scientist as well as the epileptologist will find the reviews of cellular mechanisms of focal epileptogenesis and cerebral energy metabolism and seizures comprehensive and useful.

The book is well edited and can be thoroughly recommended.

W.T. Blume,
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GENETICS AND NEUROLOGY. By Sarah Bundey. Published by Churchill Livingstone, 1985. 340 pages. $70.00 Cdn.

The objective of this book, as stated in the Preface, is "to provide practical information regarding clinical delineation of different entities, their genetic mechanisms, and the recurrence risks for genetic counselling". It is assumed that readers of the book will have a basic knowledge of genetics. The author chose not to cover amino-acid disorders, organic acid disorders, multiple malformation syndromes, psychiatry (apart from dementia), and mental deficiency.

The book contains three very informative appendices covering (1) the frequency of consanguineous matings among parents