the author accepts as a syndrome with high titre of antibodies to ribonucleoprotein and a favourable prognosis. The final chapter deals with immune complex disease and the complement system, followed by an appendix covering immunological tests in the rheumatic diseases. The book is well written, clearly set out, very readable, and covers a large field with commendable brevity.

J. T. SCOTT

A Practical Guide to the Management of the Painful Neck and Back. Diagnosis, Manipulation, Exercises, Prevention. By James W. Fisk. (Pp. xiii+209; illustrated + tables. US \$15.75.) Thomas: Springfield, Illinois. 1977.

This monograph brings a refreshingly practical approach to the management of spinal pain. The author's considerable experience and his insight into the complexities of the problem in individual patients are set out in a clear and entertaining way. Such statements, as that there is no scientific proof that exercises are of value, or that tension headaches may be due to 'the wrong pillow or the wrong bedfellow', will be readily echoed by the reader.

The aetiology of spinal pain and the basic anatomical and neurophysiological aspects of the back are outlined first. Lack of references makes it impossible to ascertain the basis for some of the less conventional theories expressed. The apparent lack of a critical review of the text by an expert colleague is more obvious when a single author deals with a vast and nebulous subject such as backache. Some imprecision of syntax and typographical errors have not been eliminated. Under metabolic bone disease, osteomalacia is not mentioned. Perhaps this condition is rarer in New Zealand than it is in Britain. The description of spinal movements is somewhat simplistic, disregarding published data on linked movements.

The author is at his best in the description of manipulation, exercises, and other methods of management, including prevention. Techniques are well illustrated and described and there is a welcome avoidance of dogmatism. Dr Fisk emphasises that the method must be learned on the living—not from books, and he rightly states that manipulation can only be offered as a trial of treatment. Perhaps he does not stress sufficiently the hazards of unexpected aggravation which can result from this method of treatment.

In conclusion, this is a very readable book which brings together the different aspects of the subject, which are often not found together in one volume. The emphasis is on manipulation and other practical methods of management.

W. Y. LOEBL

Abbrégé de Rhumatologie. 2nd edition. By L. Simon, F. Blotman, and J. Claustre. (Pp. 569; illustrated + tables. 62 Fr., paperback.) Masson: Paris. 1977.

Owing no doubt to the influence of international conferences, the spread of medical literature, and personal exchanges, French concepts of the rheumatic diseases, as set out in this book, seem to be very similar to those in this country. Apart perhaps from a greater preoccupation with metabolic bone disease as such, the French rheumatologist sees the same sort of conditions as his British colleague. Treatment is much the same in the two countries, although one suspects that the French have an even wider choice than we have of, say, anti-inflammatory agents for use in rheumatoid arthritis, and four active radioisotopes are listed for local use ('synoviorthèse'). Recommended management of gout is similar, the French again having at their disposal additional hypouricaemic agents such as thiopurinol and benzbromarone: a natural gastro-nomic proclivity permits a brief discussion upon the merits of mineral waters containing sulphates, calcium, magnesium (Vittel, Contrexeville), trace metals (Evian), and bicarbonate (Vichy). This is an excellent 'abridgement' of rheumatology for French-speaking undergraduate and postgraduate students.

J. T. SCOTT

Equipment for the Disabled. Outdoor Transport. Edited by P. J. R. Nichols and E. R. Wilshire. (Pp. 43; illustrated. £1.50.) Oxford Regional Health Authority: Oxford. 1977.

This is one of the series of booklets from Mary Marlborough Lodge at Oxford. It gives a most useful guide to outdoor wheelchairs and other mobility aids for children and adults, including electrically powered wheelchairs. It gives full dimensions and other details of items available and names of manufacturers, but does not attempt to advise in which circumstances different pieces of equipment should be used, nor does it set out to compare their relative merits. It would help if telephone numbers

could be given for the various organisations and commercial firms listed in this booklet. Simple practical advice on ramps, both home made and commercially available, are illustrated and enough comparative data and information is given to enable a choice to be made from among the commercial ramps illustrated.

There is a photograph of each item and a note against those which may be supplied under the National Health Service, although insufficient prominence is given to the fact that none of the patient-operated outdoor electric wheelchairs is available under the Health Service. Particularly as these will often be privately purchased, more comparative information of advantages and disadvantages of each type would be valuable. Van conversions for a disabled wheelchair passenger are considered, including fixing the wheelchair in the van.

There is a detailed section on seating modifications and sound advice on what to consider and where to go for adaptations to a car for a disabled driver. The booklet says that intended alterations may have to be checked with the Department of the Environment but unfortunately does not state to which part of this government department one should make application. The basic essential data of dimensions for a garage suitable for a disabled driver are clearly given, an aspect which usually receives little attention; this includes illustrations of different types of remote controlled garage doors.

Altogether it is a most useful addition to the series from Mary Marlborough Lodge; both this and the other booklets on equipment for the disabled are essential to have in every rehabilitation department.

C. J. GOODYOLL

Computerised Axial Tomography. By J. Gambarelli, G. Guérinel, L. Chevrot, and M. Mattèi. (Pp. 286; illustrated. US \$105.60.) Springer: Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York. 1977.

In 1973, Hounsfield first described the system of computerised axial tomography (CAT) which subsequently revolutionised radiological technology in allowing non-invasive investigation of the internal organs without the blurring associated with the conventional tomography. There have been dramatic technological advances since then with ever improving reduction in picture element size so improving the quality of the images