can be recommended to all with an interest in this subject.

Malcolm I.V. Jayson, M.D., F.R.C.P., *Rheumatic Diseases Centre, Hope Hospital, Salford M6 8HD*

Primer of Medicine, Fifth edition, M.H. Pappworth. Pp. v + 378, illustrated. Butterworths, London, Boston, Durban, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1984. £19.50.

This is an expanded edition of Dr Pappworth's original book, a superb account of bedside diagnosis by clinical examination. Of particular value are the chapters dealing with the chest, heart, abdomen and nervous system, the kernel of the book. There are undoubtedly errors, such as the statement that bacterial endocarditis is nearly always associated with polymorph leucocytosis. In parts also the book is outdated, as when retrograde pyelography is advocated for the diagnosis polycystic disease in the presence of renal failure, and ultrasound is not mentioned. These problems mainly arise where the author departs from his central theme, the elicitation and interpretation of physical signs. Candidates for MRCP part II, who will form the main readership, should have no difficulty in separating what is valuable from what is doubtful.

This edition has been enlarged in three ways. Extra clinical material, generally quite good, has been added. Secondly, there are many clinical photographs. It was a happy thought to save costs by reproducing them in black and white and to increase interest by printing the captions upside down on the same page. The selection of photographs is generally good, although seven pages on myxoedema seem excessive. Thirdly, an irritating feature of this edition is the extra space devoted to the author's personal and polemical views on subjects ranging from the correct length of a ward round to the diagnosis of brain death. These are not relevant to the real purpose of the book. Despite this I believe all MRCP candidates and more senior doctors who have not read an earlier edition would greatly benefit from reading the appropriate sections.

A.B. Shaw, *Bradford Royal Infirmary, Bradford, W. Yorks BD9 6RJ*

Vindicatio. A Defence of the Experimental Method, Richard Lower, Facsimile edition, limited to 250 numbered and signed copies, edited by Kenneth Dewhurst. Pp. xxxiv + 314. Sandford Publications, Oxford, 1983. £25.00.

Lower's *Vindicatio* was a scathing reply to O'Meara's *Examen* which, in defending classical concepts against the ideas of the chemists and physiologists, had attacked Willis on fevers and Harvey, Glisson and Pecquet on the experimental method. In language inconceivable to the twentieth century mind, Lower provides a robust example of the interplay between seventeenth century prejudice, politics, dogma and religion and the intellectual insights of the natural philosophers interpreted through the media of observation, mathematics and measurement.

It is always a pleasure to read Kenneth Dewhurst's elegant prose and nobody is better equipped to edit this limited facsimile edition of a now rare book. For it, he provides an informative introduction to medical personalities and their thinking in an age of reason. The Latin of the original is followed by L. Halford-Stevens' eminently readable English translation with the editor's footnotes and epilogue which illuminate the text with a wealth of classical scholarship.

In the epilogue, the editor discusses the reaction *Vindicatio* aroused. Malpighi and Capucci turned a discrete blind eye to Lower's invective and innuendo, while applauding his intellectual insights. O'Meara, on the other hand, launched a vigorous counter-attack through Cashin, a somewhat shadowy figure, to castigate both Lower and his mentor, Willis, the Sedlian Professor at Oxford. Since there seems to be no conclusive proof that Cashin actually existed, the suspicion remains that he was the subtle invention of O'Meara to rally orthodoxy to a losing cause.

The book is beautifully produced and will be an invaluable addition to any library.

Sir James Watt, *Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE*

Lecture Notes on the Infectious Diseases, Fourth edition, Bibhat K. Mandal and Richard T. Mayon-White. Pp. viii + 272, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Melbourne, 1984. £6.50.

The Fourth Edition of *Lecture Notes on the Infectious Diseases* has been brought up-to-date by an Infectious

Diseases physician and an epidemiologist and should be useful for undergraduate medical students and nurses.

My only criticism is that there appears to be a degree of imbalance in presentation, some infections being dealt with in detail while the description of others is rather brief.

The text is clearly written and easy to read and the recommendations for management of infections are practical. This book can be recommended.

A.M. Geddes, *East Birmingham Hospital,
Birmingham B9 5ST*

The Incomplete Houseman. A Guide for Medical Students and First-year Doctors, M.J. Atkins. Pp. 55. H.K. Lewis, London, 1983. £3.00.

This slim volume contains a collection of practical tips for medical students and housemen on how to communicate with patients and perform their tasks efficiently. It is written in a chatty style, serious suggestions on, for example, how to deal with angry patients, or a check-list of things to do for a pre-operative patient, being interspersed with jokey chapters concealing a simple message. The whole book can be read easily in about twenty minutes.

Dr Atkins was surely well-intentioned in writing the book, and I cannot quarrel with the majority of his advice, but I fear that much of what he says is not communicated best in book form. A houseman who arrives late for his new job without knowing where the wards are, who shouts at his patients, who loses the X-rays, and who puts blood samples in the wrong bottles is certainly performing poorly, but he is unlikely to improve by reading a book telling him not to do these things. Rather like learning to ride a bicycle, no amount of preparation can get round the need for practical experience, and a certain quantity of common sense is presumed. If difficulties are encountered, this should be apparent to a more experienced person who can best help by discussing them with the trainee.

Twenty minutes spent with one's predecessor in a job should provide as much information as this book, and would save three pounds.

Mark Collins, *Springfield Hospital, London
SW17 7DR*

Contemporary Medical Physiology, Robert L. Vick. Pp. xxxii + 1003, illustrated. Addison-Wesley, Menlo Park, California, Reading, Massachusetts, London, Amsterdam, Don Mills, Ontario, Sydney, 1984. £35.55.

The appearance of a completely new textbook of physiology is a comparatively rare event but such a book enters a crowded and competitive field. This large (1,000 pages) and expensive (£35) book is multi-authored but, perhaps because all the authors come from Baylor Medical College in the US, the style and approach are consistent throughout.

According to the preface, this book was designed to provide 'health science students with an introduction to physiology'. In practice, because of its size and approach, this book will only be of interest to medical students but, for this group, the book has many features which will make it a serious alternative to many of the traditional texts. First, it is a very attractive book to look at. It is profusely illustrated with figures and many exceptionally fine micrographs. The layout of sections and chapters is logical and clear and the inclusion of summaries at the end of each chapter (called study outlines) all greatly assist in finding ones way around in this long book. A novel feature is the inclusion of many short case histories illustrating the clinical abnormalities which occur as a result of disorders of normal physiology.

A second feature of the book is that the weight given to various topics differs from many of the alternative texts. Thus the longest sections of the book are on the cardiovascular, respiratory and endocrine systems. There are also substantial sections on metabolism and nutrition: subjects often underrepresented because they lie between physiology and biochemistry in traditional curricula. The sections on cell physiology and neurophysiology are relatively short. In my view this weighting is well suited to the needs of future medical practitioners as it stresses those areas of physiology which lead most directly to understanding the causes and treatment of the common diseases.

A third feature of the book is the very substantial amounts of clinical physiology included in the presentation. Thus in addition to the case histories, there are many chapters and sections of chapters dealing with abnormal physiology. Most preclinical courses in the UK now have substantial amounts of applied and clinical physiology within them and there is a real need for a textbook which includes adequate coverage of both basic human physiology and clinical physiology. This book comes as close as any in fulfilling this need.

In summary this textbook successfully covers the whole range of preclinical physiology and makes a valiant attempt to display physiology both as a