The Inquisitive Physician. By Francis M. Rackmann. (Pp. xi+288. 40s.) Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. (London: Cumberlege.) 1956.

This is a biography of the late Dr. George R. Minot by a lifelong friend and devoted admirer, who was closely in contact with him from boyhood until his death in 1950. The name of Minot is associated throughout the world with the conquest of pernicious anaemia; it was he who discovered that the eating of sufficient quantities of liver would infallibly produce remission of that, until then, inevitably fatal disorder, and set in train that chain of events which led to the isolation of vitamin B₁₂ and brought to him the Nobel Prize and many other honours. This is an oft-told and well-known tale, but it is only a part of the story of Minot's achievement in medicine. This achievement was motivated by a curiosity in the face of the riddles of nature, medical and otherwise, which was sustained until his death at the age of 65 after three years of progressive ill-health. His desire to impart information led him at the age of 18 to take to task the City Fathers of Boston for their neglect to defend the trees of their avenues against the ravages of the caterpillar and tussock moth. He possessed an indefatigable spirit, not only in the pursuit of new knowledge but also in the performance of the tasks immediately to hand.

Minot was fortunate in that his life span coincided with the period of the great reflowering of medicine. Towards the close of his life he remarked to his biographer, "When I think back to our intern days at the M.G.H. (Massachusetts General Hospital) and realize that there was literally no research going on in the place at that time, and when I see what is going on to-day, the contrast is extraordinary." When Minot entered the Harvard Medical School in 1908, the incoming class numbered only 65 and the capacity of the school was 125. The reason was that since 1905, on the recommendation of President Eliot, the Faculty of Medicine had demanded of all applicants the degree of Bachelor of Arts and evidence of knowledge of physics and chemistry. To-day the limit of 125 is still in force, but applications pour in at the rate of over 1,200 a year.

Throughout his life Minot was dogged by ill-health; he was a weakly child; in adolescence he suffered severely from hay fever, and at the age of 35 he developed diabetes; it was the timely discovery of insulin which preserved his life.

Minot was born and brought up in Boston, and the record throws interesting lights on a way of life in its simplicity evocative of Louisa Alcott. The book is scattered with names famous in medicine throughout America and the world and with personal reminiscences. Outstanding are the pages devoted to the late Dr. George F. Peabody, who, until his premature death at the age of 46, had been a close friend of Minot and whom in 1928 Minot succeeded as Director of the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory of the Boston City Hospital.

S. C. DYKE.

Neurochemistry, 1st ed. Edited by Saul R. Korey and John I. Nurnberger. (Pp. xi+244; 3 figures on 3 plates and 16 text figures. 50s.) London: Cassell. 1956.

The number of important advances made in recent years in our knowledge of neurochemistry is reflected in the many new publications on this subject. The latest book, edited by Korey and Nurnberger, is composed of some 16 chapters written by different American authors, all of whom are well-known research workers, even though a few are also clinicians. A general pattern is followed (which some other writers would do well to note) consisting of a short introductory précis of relevant work, the results of some personal research, a short discussion and a summary. A wide field is covered—too big for an adequate criticism by any one reader—and ranges through lipid chemistry, enzymes, nucleic acid, cerebral circulation, copper proteins, epilepsy, the neuron, and allergic encephalitis.

This book can be well recommended to those interested in any part of this field, even though, as is not uncommon in this type of work, some of the authors manage to convey their ideas to the reader with greater clarity than do others.

The book is well produced, but it may be noted that Figs. 25 and 26 with their legends should be reversed to correspond with the written text, and that ml. as the measure of volume should be used throughout.

J. N. CUMINGS.

An Outline of Bacteriology and Immunity. By Ronald Hare. (Pp. ix+418; 93 figures. 35s.) London: Longmans, Green. 1956.

Professor Hare has written this book primarily for medical students, and aims to give a wider view of bacteriology and immunity than is usually presented. Emphasis is laid particularly on the relationship of bacteria and viruses to man in health and disease. The importance of endemic and epidemic infection to the individual and the community is stressed, and there are excellent chapters dealing with the many factors concerned with the spread of infection. Systematic bacteriology has been relegated to a relatively small section at the end of the book; it includes a brief description of the fungi of medical importance. This aspect is dealt with in a superficial manner and is unlikely to be of value to the practising bacteriologist.

Some statements will not, however, be generally accepted; e.g., that the taurocholate in MacConkey's medium prevents the growth of *Proteus vulgaris*; that peptone broth is a watery solution of peptone; that it is impossible by any known method to alter the capacity of *Staph. aureus* to produce penicillinase. Nevertheless, this book contains much to interest the pathologist, and, as many references are given, an opportunity is afforded of studying the different subjects in greater detail.

R. W. FAIRBROTHER.