BOOK REVIEWS

Atlas der Phasenkontrasthämatologie. By Hansjürgen Rind. (Pp. 392; 1,094 figures. £6 15s.) Berlin: Akademie-Verlag. 1958.

Hämatologischer Atlas. By Horst Stobbe. (Pp. 304; 236 figures. £5 19s.) Berlin: Akademie-Verlag. 1959.

During much of the history of clinical pathology the literature has been greatly indebted to German workers. Most senior pathologists were brought up on their textbooks, which were always characterized by minute attention to detail and exhaustive if not always critically analysed references. Excellence of colour printing and of photographic reproduction was also commendable.

Much of this leadership was lost during the political upheavals of the middle years of this century; and meanwhile the vast expansion of American and British work has deviated attention from German contributions. It is a pleasure therefore to welcome these two complementary studies, which fully adhere to the high standards of traditional German work, both pictorially and academically.

Phase-contrast microscopy has perhaps been most revealing in the study of the cells of the blood and bone marrow, as from these sources cells can most easily be obtained in a fresh state, without undesirable manipulation such as is involved in trypsin dispersal. Cytoplasmic control in particular has for the first time been fully revealed, and there is little doubt that fresh classifications, particularly in leukaemia, await workers in this field.

The atlas of phase-contrast haematology edited by Hansjürgen Rind is a massive work, including an elaborate exposition of technical methods. There are more than a thousand illustrations, copiously annotated, together with a reasonably complete list of references. Due credit is paid to Bessis, one of the earliest pioneers.

Horst Stobbe contributes a section to this work, and his own haematological atlas is complementary since it deals mainly with stained preparations, but includes phase-contrast correlations; moreover, Rind's atlas gives a particular emphasis to the haematology of childhood. There are detailed commentaries on the excellent illustrations, and a full discussion of technical procedures.

R. J. V. PULVERTAFT.

The Thyroid Gland. [*Brit. med. Bull.*] (Pp. 86. 20s.) London: British Council. May, 1960.

The high standards associated with the *British Medical Bulletin* have been worthily upheld by the latest number on the thyroid gland. In a short but masterly introduction Sir Charles Harington not only

places in perspective the rapid advances made during the past decade but indicates some of the more important unsolved problems.

The formation of thyroid auto-antibodies, possibly the most dramatic of recent discoveries, is authoritatively reviewed by I. M. Roitt and D. Doniach, who discuss the value of such tests in the diagnosis of Hashimoto's disease and certain thyroid disorders.

The genetic aspects of thyroid disease are considered by F. D. Kitchen and W. Howel Evans and by E. M. McGirr, who describes a fascinating study in which sporadic goitrous cretinism was manifested in no fewer than 13 different members of a single family. W. R. Trotter discusses the association of deafness with thyroid dysfunction and concludes that in cases of Pendred's syndrome there is strong evidence for a common genetic abnormality responsible for both defects whereas endemic deaf-mutism is largely the result of environmental rather than genetic factors.

Recent work on the biosynthesis of thyroid hormones is capably summarized by R. Pitt-Rivers, while the significance of protein binding in relation to their transport is discussed by J. R. Tata. A convincing explanation of the differences in the physiological activities of thyroxine and tri-iodothyronine is given.

G. S. Boyd and M. F. Oliver have reviewed the effects of thyroid hormones and related compounds on plasma cholesterol levels, and have concluded that certain analogues may be of therapeutic value in coronary heart disease. Limitations of space do not permit more than mere mention of the other contributions, which deal with types of thyroid growth, genesis of nodular goitre, the diagnostic use of radio-iodine, naturally occurring goitrogens, placental transport, and the interrelationships of the thyroid with the pituitary, the central nervous system, and the hypothalamus.

The Scientific Editor, Dr. N. B. Myant, is to be heartily congratulated on the excellence of this Bulletin, which will prove invaluable to all interested in the thyroid whatever their specialty might be.

J. H. WILKINSON.

Diagnostic Radioisotopes. By Charles A. Owen, Jr. (Pp. xix+425; 70 figures, 49 tables. £6 6s.) Oxford: Blackwell. 1959.

A number of competent books on this and related subjects have been published in recent years, and it is against these that this book must be judged. All of them face a common problem: that of achieving a satisfactory balance between, on the one hand, discussion of the purely physical problems of radioactivity measurement, and the theoretical considerations upon which the isotopic techniques are based, and, on the other hand, descriptions of the methods currently in use and interpretation of results. Some succeed better than others in the balance achieved; this book fails completely.