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.

The chapters on counting techniques are largely useless and are in no way improved by the many illustrations of boxes of electronic equipment which have no difficulty in preserving their anonymity behind their front panels. The theoretical bases of some of the problems are poorly explained, others, e.g., those involving multicompartment systems, are not discussed at all.

The allotment of space to methods and interpretations bears little relation to their importance; for instance, 10 pages are devoted to the problem of B_{12} absorption, but only 13 to the whole of the cardiovascular system, electrolyte and fluid spaces, and protein metabolism. Indeed, these latter subjects cannot be said to have been properly presented at all.

There are extensive but largely uncritical reviews of the literature relating to medical isotopes, and 64 out of the 381 pages of text are devoted to pointless tables including logarithm tables and that ubiquitous du Bois surface area nomogram.

You may have all this for six guineas.

C. J. HAYTER.

The Anti-Globulin (Coombs) Test in Laboratory Practice. By I. Dunsford and Jean Grant. (Pp. xiii+120; 11 tables, 9 figures. 12s. 6d.). Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd. 1959.

This book is admirably written by two leading authorities on the subject of the antiglobulin reaction or Coombs test. The test has not only proved of great importance in the advancement of knowledge in various biological sciences with particular reference to blood groups, but it is widely used in hospital blood transfusion practice for the prediction and diagnosis of haemolytic disease of the newborn and also to enhance the safety of many other blood transfusion procedures. The authors explain the fundamentals of the test from all angles in a style which is both lucid and informative. They include comprehensive references to the world literature and make suggestions for further reading which may help in relation to individual problems. The work, which is delightfully produced and of modest price, is recommended strongly. It should be on the bookshelves of bacteriologists, haematologists, blood transfusion workers, forensic and veterinary scientists, and last, but not least, those medical students and practitioners interested in that field.

E. K. BLACKBURN.

Forensic Medicine. By A. Keith Mant. (Pp. vii+262; 114 figures. 42s.) London: Lloyd-Luke. 1959.

This is a further addition to the already numerous small textbooks of forensic medicine. It may be classified as one of the "horrific" class from the point of view of some of the illustrations, for similar photographs have caused comment by members of the legal profession in the past, but it is difficult to see why

juries should be spared them if they are of value. For police officers, the approach is inclined to be too medical, and it is elementary for pathologists and incomplete for general practitioners, one of whose main interests must be the problems of "alcoholic intoxication" which, somewhat surprisingly, are omitted.

The production is very good and the illustrations well printed, but it seems a pity that many of the individuals could be recognized. It does not seem to be an "essential" for the bookshelf of clinical pathologists, medico-legally interested or otherwise.

F. CAMPS.

A Textbook of Bacteriology, 8th ed. revised and enlarged. By R. W. Fairbrother. (Pp. vii+502; 7 plates, 32 tables. 25s.) London: Heinemann. 1959.

Fairbrother's well-known textbook is now in its eighth edition and retains the characters of reliability and conciseness which have made it so valuable to medical students. It now includes brief reference to many of the newly described viruses as well as to the newer antibiotics and other recent developments, but these have not managed to oust a good many references to ideas or to methods that are now superseded.

R. E. O. WILLIAMS.

The Biochemical Response to Injury. Report of a symposium organized by C.I.O.M.S., Vienna, 1958. (Pp. xi+467; illustrated. 57s. 6d.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1960.

This is a report of a symposium organized by C.I.O.M.S. following the fourth International Congress of Biochemistry in Vienna in September, 1958. The Chairman was very appropriately Dr. D. P. Cuthbertson, whose pioneer work on the metabolic response to trauma 30 years ago has stood the test of time, and on whose early observations has been built much of the more recent work. It is sometimes doubtful how useful is the publication of symposia, which may have been of the greatest value to the participants, but are of less lasting general interest; there is no doubt that this publication is very well justified: it deals with a subject of growing importance, from both the experimental and clinical points of view. "Shock" is still a condition which it is impossible to define accurately, but the more we know of the metabolic changes which occur after trauma the nearer we are to understanding it, and the more rational will be the treatment.

The participants include many of the leading workers in this field from all over the world, and the contributions give a very stimulating approach to many problems. This is a book which should be widely available, and should be referred to frequently, not only by pathologists, but even more by surgeons.

E. N. ALLOTT.