

This slim volume gives in a brief and easily comprehensible manner, the current state of the knowledge of bile pigment metabolism in relation to human pathology. In the first chapter there is an introduction to the chemical structure, nomenclature, and reactions of the bile pigments. This is followed in chapter 2 by a summary of the chemistry of haemoglobin breakdown. The bulk of the book is concerned with an historical presentation of recent work on the biosynthesis of the bile pigments, and on the separation of the conjugated and unconjugated bilirubin pigments in the blood, with the consequent elucidation of the nature of the Van den Bergh reactions. The last chapters give brief, but clear, discussions of the methods of estimation of bile pigments in blood and urine, and the findings in patients with jaundice. The exciting advances in this field are described with a clarity and economy of language which makes the book very readable. The general production of the book is good, and the printing, figures, and diagrams clear. There is also a good index.

This book is not intended for an expert in this field of chemistry, but will prove of great interest and value to those who have a general interest in bile pigment metabolism.

M. G. RINSLER


Urology is certainly a progressive speciality. When the first series of 'Modern Trends in Urology' was published a few years ago the subjects with which it dealt were predominantly such as would be of interest to a urological surgeon only. In the second series which has just been published both general medicine and pathology have a larger place and clinical pathologists will note with special interest the chapters on renal biopsy, tumours of the renal pelvis and ureter, tumours of the adrenal gland, and new growths of the testis. Moreover, pathology and biochemistry have successfully infiltrated into many of the other chapters though written by clinicians or surgeons.

This second series, like the first, has been edited by Sir Eric Riches, who, though himself an eminent and skilful urological surgeon, has always welcomed and encouraged pathologists and biochemists to 'make themselves at home' in urology.

CUTHBERT DUKES


This elegantly produced volume records the papers and discussions at the Seventh Annual Scientific Meeting of the Houston Neurological Society held in March 1959 at the Texas Medical Centres.

Chapters of some interest to pathologists are those on Embryology and Anatomy (H. A. Kaplan), The Natural History of Atherosclerosis (R. L. Holman and J. Mooshey), Pathology of Intracerebral Haemorrhage (C. M. Fisher), Cerebral Aneurysms (D. E. Smith and R. B. Windsor), and Subarachnoid Haemorrhage (O. T. Bailey). In addition there are surveys of biochemical aspects (A. C. Griffin) and of problems of thrombosis and blood coagulation (C. A. Owens, Jr. and J. H. Thompson, Jr.). The last of these begins with a statement that will cause many eyebrows to rise: 'A thrombus by definition is a clot!'

On the whole these pathological chapters are not pitched at a high level. They are clearly intended as a mere introduction to the clinical matters that follow, and, as a result, much of their content is already out of date. It seems unlikely that many will consider the volume worth the very high price quoted.

T. CRAWFORD


This work is well described on the title page as chemical pathology in relation to clinical medicine. It is the proceedings of a symposium organized by the Association of Clinical Pathologists. It is worthy of publication because it gives a good view of the adrenal cortex in relation to clinical medicine. Naturally, the picture is not complete, but no symposium can ever cover all the ground and the decision as to what to include and what to leave out is not an easy one. The Chairman, Professor C. H. Gray, and the two Organizing Secretaries, who also edited the publication, are to be congratulated on their choice of material. The work will make valuable reading both for the pathologist and for the physician. As the Chairman says in his preface, it was intended to provide an up-to-date account of the chemical pathology of the adrenal cortex rather than a forum for discussion between experts in the field. The first papers are described as chemical pathology and deal with the structure of the gland in relation to hormone production, the chemistry and physiology of the hormones produced by the gland, and various aspects of the determination of the hormones and their metabolites in urine. This is followed by a
section on clinical applications dealing with adreno-
cortical hyperfunction and hypofunction in adults,
adrenocortical disorders in children, aldosteronism, and
the complications of corticosteroid therapy. All the papers
are good: particular mention should be made of those of
T. Symington and R. H. W. Edwards in the section on
chemical pathology, and those of J. D. N. Nabarro, M.
D. Milne, and R. I. S. Bayliss in the section on clinical
applications.

It is to be hoped that this symposium will be the fore-
runner of many more; there is a great and increasing
need for chemical pathology and clinical medicine to come
closer to one another, and it will not be accomplished
by the physician ignoring the chemistry of the phenomena
he observes nor by the chemist ceasing to be a physician.

ARTHUR JORDAN

FUNCTIONS OF THE BLOOD. Edited by R. G. Macfarlane
The aim of this book is to present a 'unifying approach to
the study of blood, concentrating on its function'. In
order to achieve this objective, the editors have called
upon a panel of distinguished scientists, each an expert in
his own chosen field, to contribute to the book. Despite
the multiple authorship, the text is pleasantly easy to
read and without undue conflict of styles. The illustrations
are uniformly good and the whole publication is of a
very high standard which is reflected in the price.

The necessity for such a book as this, which seeks not
only to increase our understanding but also to restore
biological perspective, is symptomatic of our times. It
reflects the enormous growth of knowledge in the field
of disorders of the blood, the fragmentation of haemato-
logy into numerous sub-specialities, the confusing
omenclature, and the increasingly complex technology.

The editors of any book which attempts such an
ambitious role must exercise some degree of selection of
the subject matter, for it is manifestly impossible to cover
all aspects. The coverage in this book is wide and few
will quarrel with the choice of subjects. The list of
chapters includes, among others, an historical review,
the evolution of the human red cell, the morphology of
blood cells, the maintenance of the cell populations in
the peripheral blood, blood cell metabolism, blood cell
antigens, reaction of the blood to injury, and the main-
tenance of iso-osmolarity.

The approach to each subject is functional and teleo-
logical, although morphology is not neglected, but
structural changes are used mainly to explain dynamic
processes. The views on many haematological problems
are those which are commonly accepted on the basis of
the available evidence, but where knowledge is incomplete
this is clearly indicated. Each chapter is provided with
an excellent and up-to-date bibliography.

Those who are interested in the blood and its disorders,
either as clinicians, laboratory workers, or students, will
delve deeply into this book. They will be both enlightened
and refreshed. Few books published in this field in
recent years have been as stimulating, instructive and
philosophical as 'Functions of the Blood'.

M. G. NELSON
THE ADRENAL CORTEX

Arthur Jordan

doi: 10.1136/jcp.15.1.97-d

Updated information and services can be found at: http://jcp.bmj.com/content/15/1/97.4.citation

*These include:*

**Email alerting service**
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to: http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to: http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to: http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/