BOOK REVIEWS

Proteínas Plasmáticas. By J. Gras (Pp. xv+542; 154 figures; 47 tables. Pes. 420.) Barcelona: Editorial Jims. 1956.

With the ever-increasing interest in plasma proteins, and the enormous number of publications on this subject appearing all over the world, there is a very urgent demand for a book which would bring the available information up to date. Dr. Gras's book may well fill such a gap. In 542 pages the author attempts to present an account of the present state of knowledge on this fascinating subject. Apart from his own considerable personal contribution to the study of plasma proteins, he has obviously devoted a very considerable amount of work in trying to collect and segregate a wealth of material now available, but which is scattered in hundreds of publications. The book deals with all aspects of the complex problem of plasma proteins. It begins with a detailed definition and classification of the plasma protein fractions. A chapter is devoted to the description and evaluation of the various methods and techniques employed in separating and obtaining the protein fractions. The author's own method and the hyposulphate fractionation method in particular are presented in detail and the results discussed. Electrophoretic methods are given abundant space, although one could wish that the latest techniques, such as agar and starch electrophoresis and immuno-electrophoresis, were given more prominence and not only a short mention. Views on the theoretical basis of the complementary reactions depending on the alterations of the plasma proteins are presented and the applications and relative significance of these tests are discussed. These reactions include the commonly used flocculation test, the E.S.R., and many other tests perhaps not so widely used in this country. Special attention is paid to the problem of the origin, genesis, and functions of the plasma proteins, including their complexes such as lipo-proteins, mucoproteins, and glyco-proteins. Antibody formation and the immunological functions of plasma proteins are also given due prominence. Metabolism of plasma proteins is discussed in a separate chapter. The author then proceeds to describe and discuss the normal proteinogram, its physiological variations, and mechanism of regulation. Having presented his own views and those of other workers as to what is to be regarded as a normal quantitative and qualitative pattern, the author then tackles the very complicated problem of pathological alterations of the proteinogram which he divides into three main groups: disproteinæmias with hyperproteinæmia, disproteinæmias with no increase or only slight changes in the total proteins, and those with hypoproteinæmia. A

special group is formed by the so-called specific disproteinæmias which include conditions such as dis-fibrinogenæmias, agammaglobulinaemia, etc. Qualitative alterations such as cryoglobulinaemia and amyloidosis are discussed under the name of paraproteinæmias. Much information can be found on the influence of various substances on the proteinogram; these include A.C.T.H. and cortisone. The bibliography is prodigious and comprises 1,899 references up to 1955, and it is presented at the end of each chapter. With such a wealth of references it is perhaps not surprising that the titles of the papers quoted are not given. There are 154 figures and 47 tables in the book, both the author's own as well as other workers'. The figures are well chosen although the legends are at times somewhat confusing. The book is well printed on good paper, but some of the photographic reproductions are not up to standard, in particular those of the filter-paper electrophoresis strips. The book is a veritable mine of information, and should be welcomed by all interested in the subject of plasma proteins. It is perhaps a pity that it is published only in Spanish, a language which is not commonly read in this country or on the Continent.

J. KOHN.

Immuno-Hématologie Biologique et Clinique. By Jean Dausset. (Pp. 728; 25 figures. Fr. frs. 3,950.) Paris: Éditions Médicales Flammarion. 1956.

This large book of 728 pages is probably unique. It is in reality three monographs dealing in detail with the "immunohaematology" of the red cells, leucocytes, and platelets, respectively. Serological, clinical, and technical aspects are all thoroughly covered. The monographs on leucocytes and platelets and their antigens, groups, and antibodies are of particular value, because here Dr. Dausset brings together a great deal of new information, almost all of it published in the last five years, as well as the fruits of his own personal investigations. Each section of each monograph has its own extensive bibliography, the papers referred to being of world-wide origin—those on the platelets number no less than 500 and on the leucocytes only slightly less, while there are more than 2,000 references to the red cells. It is good to see that the titles of the papers are given.

The text is rather sparsely illustrated, with only 25 figures, but there are in addition 35 tables and occasional summaries of case histories illustrative of the main clinical syndromes. There is a combined subject and author index.

Dr. Dausset's book is warmly recommended to all those interested in his subject.

J. V. DACIE.