

be seen in full without turning a page. The description of each method is given step by step, but rather concisely. Formulae for calculating results are given without explaining their derivation. In none of the colorimetric methods is any mention made of the range over which Beer's law is obeyed, and in most only a single standard is recommended, of a value well below the upper range found in patients. It is a surprise to find that under the Nesslerization techniques for blood urea and plasma proteins only ammonia standards are mentioned; however, tucked away inconspicuously at the end of the book one finds a most important section on analytical control which gives some useful hints on the maintenance of accuracy, and here the importance of standard protein and urea solutions is acknowledged. A good point is the information on the accuracy to which reports should be given, e.g., faecal fats to the nearest 1%. Only one misprint was noted, that maximal urea clearance is "proportional to" instead of "independent of" urine minute volume.

This, then, is another practical bench book which gives concise descriptions of most of the biochemical investigations carried out in the average hospital laboratory, but which has rather a local flavour. Like

other books of this type, it devotes little space to errors which may arise and methods of preventing them. Thus the reader derives little benefit from the experience of the author, and will have to learn the hard way that, for instance, the specific gravity method for plasma proteins gives high results in uraemia, or that traces of acetone can ruin a Nesslerization method, or that errors in urine specific gravity will result if the temperature of the urine is different from that at which the urinometer has been calibrated. It is arguable that such books no longer meet the needs of present-day laboratories. At a time when the errors which may arise in routine chemical analysis are becoming more widely recognized, laboratories are faced with a steady increase in the range and complexity of biochemical investigations and a shortage of skilled and experienced technicians. This calls for a much fuller description of methods, which should incorporate the practical experience of the best laboratories, with full details of possible errors and their prevention. Something on these lines has already been achieved in *Standard Methods of Clinical Chemistry*, and it is to be hoped that this example will be more widely followed.

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