BOOK REVIEWS

The Pathology of Tumours of the Nervous System.

By Dorothy S. Russell and L. J. Rubinstein. (Pp. 318; 286 figures. 70s.) London: Edward Arnold. 1959.

Just before the last war a number of colleagues of the late Dr. J. G. Greenfield were encouraging him to write a textbook on cerebral tumours as well as on neuropathology. He wrote the latter, which has recently been published. Dr. Greenfield felt unable to accomplish the former and so passed this onerous task to Professor Russell. She and Dr. Rubinstein have drawn upon their very wide experience, together with an all-embracing survey of the literature, and have given to pathologists a volume that will surely remain the standard work on the pathology of cerebral tumours for very many years to come. Almost every pathologist at some time has the task of reporting on the histological nature of intracranial or intraspinal tumours, and all will be indebted to these two authors for their extremely lucid description of all varieties of such tumours.

The chapters deal with the varying types of tumour that may be found, ranging from those of a maldevelopmental nature, the retina, and peripheral tumours of the neurone series, including phaeochromocytomas. In addition to the more common types of tumour, such as the glioma and meningioma, there is of course a chapter on pineal tumours, upon which the senior author has done so much work. Methods of classification of the glioma group are discussed, and the authors support the more conservative opinion of continuing the use of the terms "glioblastoma multiforme" and "malignant astrocytoma."

The authors have included one chapter by Professor C. E. Lumsden on tissue culture in relation to tumours, and this is excellent.

It seems a little hard for this reviewer to criticize, even though he has imbibed Greenfield's thoughts, having been a close colleague, but it would have helped pathologists in general if a chapter could have been added on pituitary tumours. These have been deliberately omitted, as is explained in the introduction.

Other minor comments that one can make are that it might have been easier to have arranged the order of Figs. 34 to 37 to correspond to the order of the description in the text of the various types of meningioma (not that they are numbered incorrectly); to maintain uniformity in the spelling of the word neurone; and to use the modern way for the spelling of such words as "criticize." Otherwise, no praise can be too high for this volume. It will have to be on every pathologist's bookshelf, and the authors have placed us all permanently in their debt, not only for their descriptive ability but also for the beauty of their illustrations.

J. N. CUMINGS.

Antibiotics in Medicine [*British Medical Bulletin*]. (Pp. 88; 4 art plates. 20s.) London: British Council. January, 1960.

An edition of the *British Medical Bulletin* devoted to antibiotics in medicine under the scientific editorship of Professor Garrod is a welcome event. With the large and ever-increasing number of antibiotics, which, as Professor Garrod points out in the introduction, are quite literally being unearthed from soil samples all over the world, the subject is inevitably confusing, and what makes "confusion worse confounded" is that each masquerades under a variety of trade names.

In this issue of the *British Medical Bulletin* some attempt is made at classification on two fronts, namely chemistry and antibacterial activity. The former is attempted in an admirably clear article by E. P. Abraham and G. C. F. Newton, and it is no reflection on their contribution to say that to the simple-minded clinical bacteriologist it is rather disappointing to see antibiotics with such widely divergent activity as cycloserine, penicillins, chloramphenicol, bacitracins, and polymyxins classified together.

Since antibiotics are derived from living organisms they inevitably display selective toxicity. This aspect is discussed by E. F. Gale, with special reference to the mode of action of penicillin, surface-active antibiotics, and chloramphenicol. The outstanding nature of Gale's own contribution to this subject is well known and this article needs no further commendation. In his conclusion Gale points out that studies of this nature have not so far helped very much in providing a rational approach to the design of chemotherapeutic agents. Nevertheless these studies have already done much to elucidate some of the mechanisms of bacterial metabolism, as well as the biochemistry of protein synthesis, so that their fundamental importance cannot be over-emphasized.

The next contribution, by M. R. Pollock, is concerned with the scientific basis of drug resistance and points out possible lines of prevention. The clinical problems connected with this subject are discussed generally by E. J. L. Lowbury, and from the point of view of the treatment of tuberculosis by John Crofton. All three contributions are worthy of close study.

The "Principles of Therapeutic Use" are described by L. P. Garrod and E. F. Scowen. As might be expected from the authors, the contribution is full of wisdom, perhaps not least in its opening sentence, which is as follows: "The first decision to be made when antibiotic treatment is contemplated is whether it is necessary at all." The rest of the article outlines the basis of "well-directed treatment limited to cases really requiring it" and includes a useful table of the comparative sensitivities of the common pathogens to the principal antibiotics.

Other contributions deal with the pharmacology of antibiotics, their preventive use in medicine and