

It is clearly the intention of the editors to provide a forum for original thought rather than factual surveys of the year's progress in a group of selected fields, as in other annual reviews. Their approach has been successful and the annual appearance of future volumes will be anticipated with pleasure.

W. G. SPECTOR

DISORDERS OF VOLUNTARY MUSCLE¹ Edited by J. N. Walton. (Pp. x + 628; 743 figures. 100s.) London: Churchill. 1964.

Here, in one volume, is a comprehensive account of muscle diseases. It is edited by J. N. Walton, neurologist to the Regional Neurological Centre in Newcastle¹; the majority of the 26 contributors are from Britain. Although it is aimed primarily at the clinician, the book is likely to be of more interest to the general clinical pathologist than other recent works on the subject, and can be recommended to anyone in search of an up-to-date review of this fascinating, although still rather puzzling, field of medicine.

The first section of the book is devoted to a consideration of modern views on the structure and function of muscle. The second section describes the changes, both structural and biochemical, which occur in disease: departments where diagnostic investigations on patients with muscle diseases are carried out will find much of use in the chapters on 'Biochemical aspects' (R. J. Pennington), 'Intramuscular nerve endings' (A. L. Woolf), and 'Pathological reactions of the skeletal muscle fibre' (R. D. Adams). The third section consists of a series of essays on the clinical and genetic aspects of muscular disease; it includes excellent accounts of 'Progressive muscular dystrophy' (J. N. Walton) and 'Polymyositis' (C. M. Pearson). The final section deals with electrical methods of investigation of neuromuscular disorders.

The use of serum creatine kinase determinations in the identification of female carriers of the genetically-determined Duchenne type of muscular dystrophy is noted in several sections of the book. At the present stage, it can be said that if in a female relative of an affected boy the serum creatine kinase is considerably greater than 3.5 units per 100 ml. (60 international units), she is almost certainly a carrier of the gene and is liable to pass on the disease to half of her sons. A normal reading does not, however, exclude the carrier state, as about a quarter of known carriers have been found to have creatine kinase values within the normal range. This is a finding with which, as clinical pathologists, we should be familiar.

HUBERT SISSONS

¹It is of interest to know, although not mentioned in the book under review, that there are a number of laboratories in this country where, with the support of the Muscular Dystrophy Group, determinations of creatine kinase are being regularly carried out for this purpose. They are: Dr. D. A. Ellis, Midland Centre for Neurosurgery, Smethwick; Miss E. Finch, The Children's Hospital, Sheffield; Dr. B. P. Hughes, The National Hospital, Queen Square, London; Dr. R. J. T. Pennington, Regional Neurological Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne; Dr. W. H. S. Thomson, Knightswood Hospital, Glasgow.

SPECTROPHOTOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF DRUGS INCLUDING ATLAS OF SPECTRA By Irving Sunshine and S. R. Gerber. (Pp. xvii + 235; illustrated. \$10.50.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1963.

The analysis of body fluids for drugs is becoming a more important and at the same time an increasingly difficult aspect of the work of chemical pathology laboratories. At present most of the diagnostic techniques involve spectrophotometric or chromatographic methods. Drs. Sunshine and Gerber have made considerable contributions to the technical solution of some of the problems involved in the detection and identification of drugs, and this book embodies a wealth of experience in the spectrophotometric analysis of such specimens.

The volume is divided into three main sections and is introduced by an index of spectra in order of increasing wavelength of maximum absorption to facilitate the identification of unknown spectra. Chapter 1 presents the extraction procedures that Dr. Sunshine uses. Chapter 2 is an atlas of the ultra-violet absorption spectra of over a hundred drugs in O-IN H₂SO₄ and O-IN NaOH, respectively, often at more than one concentration. Chapter 3 gives the infra-red absorption spectra of the compounds studied. These latter will be of little practical use at present as few laboratories can have access to recording infra-red spectrophotometers. However, the presence of these spectra in the book will be a constant stimulus to increase the technical facilities available to our laboratories. There is a useful index at the back of the book, though of course the trade names are largely American.

M. G. RINSLER

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ANTICOAGULANT TREATMENT By L. Poller. (Pp. 158; 36 figures. 27s. 6d.) Bristol: John Wright and Sons. 1962.

In this book Dr. Poller gives a balanced account of the controversial subject of anticoagulant therapy. At the same time he achieves a balance between the clinical and laboratory aspects of the subject making the book useful to both clinicians and pathologists. After considering the mechanism of blood clotting and thrombosis, the various anticoagulant drugs available and methods of control, there are valuable chapters on the indications and practical management of both short- and long-term anticoagulant therapy in a variety of disorders. He advocates the use of prophylactic anticoagulant therapy in selected surgical cases. Details of laboratory techniques are given in an appendix. Each chapter has a useful summary and an adequate list of references. Minor criticisms are that some of the photomicrographs are so poorly reproduced as to be useless and the print of the captions appears unnecessarily small.

There is no doubt that much of the anticoagulant therapy practised today is either ineffective or dangerous. This book helps to make the treatment safe and effective and can be recommended to all concerned in the management of anticoagulant therapy.

D. ROBERTSON SMITH

doctors anxious to grasp the implications of this development, but it could be helpful to the few already grappling with bio-medical electronics and familiar with computer jargon. It should be of great value to those scientists engaged in the engineering of computers and related equipment. Most of the discussion is orientated around the application of computer techniques to the problem of automatically recording and interpreting electrocardiograms. This is a particularly difficult field but it serves well to illustrate that all those contemplating making use of a computer must formulate their problems in very exact terms.

This book is well produced and has an adequate index. Whether the verbatim presentation is preferable to a conventional report is a matter of opinion but the reviewer found the text stimulating and easy to assimilate. This is a book to be bought by the progressive medical library rather than by the individual pathologist.

F. V. FLYNN

A SYNOPSIS OF SURGICAL PATHOLOGY By Wilfred Kark. (Pp. 426; 26 figures. 45s.) Bristol: John Wright. 1964.

This pocket-sized book of lecture notes on surgical pathology contains unavoidable simplifications and omissions. Pathologists will regret these, but know how difficult it is to report pathological changes succinctly and completely, and will realize that Mr. Wilfred Kark often succeeds brilliantly with his brief descriptions of the morbid anatomy and histopathology of surgical diseases. The didactic annotated text can be read quickly and a lot of uncontroversial information obtained in a short time.

In this country the teaching of pathology is becoming more closely integrated with that of clinical practice, and few students should find this book essential. Pathologists are more likely to recommend it to their senior technician who helps with the surgical specimens than to medical students, and the fate of this new synopsis will depend upon the amount of goodwill it can generate among students who read this at the eleventh hour before their final examinations.

R. A. B. DRURY

PROTIDES OF THE BIOLOGICAL FLUIDS

The 13th annual colloquium on the Protides of the Biological Fluids will be held in Bruges on 29-30 April and 1-2 May 1965. Topics to be discussed are lipoproteins, proteins of the nervous system, and impedance measurements of the proteins. At 'round tables' the subjects to be discussed are the physical, chemical, and clinical method of lipoprotein analysis, and the proteins of the nervous system.

All information may be obtained from:—COLLOQUIUM, Protides of the Biological Fluids, P.B. 71, Bruges, Belgium.

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

The report on exertional haemoglobinuria in the September 1964 issue of the Journal adds substance to an hypothesis proposed many years ago. In 1903 in the *Transactions of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London* (volume 86, page 165), C. W. Ensor and J. O. W. Barratt presented a case of 'Paroxysmal haemoglobinuria of traumatic origin'. The patient, a young man with schizophrenia, would lie on his hospital bed violently slapping his forehead for an hour or two, and haemoglobinuria would appear thereafter. The loss of haemoglobin was equivalent to that in 2 or 3 ml. of blood. This is, I believe, the only reported case of exertional haemoglobinuria associated with exercise of the upper extremities only. Ensor and Barratt proposed that the haemolysis occurred with the injuring of red cells by the violent slapping, a suggestion which anticipates Dr. Davidson's that exertional haemoglobinuria in runners results from mechanical damage to red cells in the soles of the feet.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM H. CROSBY,

Colonel, M.C.

Chief, Department of Hematology,
Walter Reed Army Medical Center,
Washington, D.C.

CORRECTIONS

Professor I. Friedmann (*J. clin. Path.*, 18, 63-68) writes that his attention has been drawn to another case of rhabdomyosarcoma of the ear in a girl of 4 years which was described by Professor Dorothy Russell in her book written jointly with L. J. Rubenstein ('Pathology of tumours of the nervous system', 1st ed., 1959, page 215). This case has not been described separately in any journal.

In the note on page 134 (*J. clin. Path.*, 18, 1965) it is stated that at the Midland Centre for Neurosurgery determinations of creatine kinase are being regularly carried out by Dr. D. A. Ellis with the support of the Muscular Dystrophy Group. While it is quite true that the Muscular Dystrophy Group have most generously supported Dr. Ellis in research on muscular dystrophy, the determinations of creatine kinase are carried out by Dr. R. A. Westhead in the Centre's biochemistry laboratory without assistance from the Muscular Dystrophy Group.

In the September issue of the paper by A. G. Baikie and E. M. Gillis (*J. clin. Path.*, 17, 573-574) we regret that Figures 2 and 3 have been transposed.