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The November 1966 Issue

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- Staphylococcus aureus* on the hair W. C. NOBLE
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- Automated estimation of urinary calcium using the Eppendorf flame photometer A. M. BOLD
- Technical methods*
- Developments in laboratory equipment*
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Book reviews

ALMROTH WRIGHT—FOUNDER OF MODERN VACCINE-THERAPY By Sir Zachary Cope. (Pp. 184; illustrated. 42s.) London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. 1966.

Some critics of the great man expressed their view of him by naming him 'Almost Right'. Despite its wit, this misses the mark; for the truth about him was that, as a rule, he was either brilliantly right, approaching to genius, or else hopelessly wrong. And it was extremely difficult for his contemporaries, whether admirers or detractors, to know if he was right or wrong in his latest pronouncement. At all events, the intervals between pronouncements were short enough to preclude any stability in Wright's reputation as it alternately soared and plunged. His use of words also made it hard to assess him. He could be brilliantly right about typhoid vaccine and could resolutely stick to his convictions despite the off-putting devices and repeated postponements and manoeuvres organized to oppose him in this matter. Likewise he could be hopelessly wrong in his assessment of the value of the opsonic index, although in later years he was as sound and vigorous a critic of his own earlier mistakes as anyone could have been.

Obviously he commanded respect, as well as opposition; and genuine affection, as well as bitter antagonism. His philosophy and logic were even more curious and harder to understand than his bacteriology and immunity. But Haldane, Balfour, and Shaw were among his friends and they thought enough of him—as did a great many ordinary patients of St. Mary's—to take a great deal of trouble to help him and his work.

Moreover, his laboratory flourished, and the names of the people who were glad to work under him are surely good enough to guarantee that this unusual man was able to give something of value. For his colleagues ('disciples' might be a better word) included Fleming, Freeman, Colebrook, Douglas, Parry, Morgan, and Leishman.

His present biographer, Sir Zachary Cope, has presented a fully sympathetic and understanding account of Wright. Loyalty and affection seem to have held the balance against criticism; but those who wish a fair picture of Wright will here discover enough about his errors and weaknesses to understand why this notable Irishman was so controversial a figure as well as so great a contributor to science.

J. W. HOWIE

ZYSTENZEPHALIE (BLASENHIRN) By R. Dietze and H. K. Urban. (Pp. 139; 93s. 2d.) Leipzig: Veb Georg Thieme. 1965.

This monograph is concerned with the clinical findings and diagnosis of a somewhat rare condition occurring in infants, namely, cystencephalus. The authors describe two variants of this disorder, hydromencephalus (effusion into the dura mater) and hydranencephalus (transformation of the cerebral hemispheres into a fluid-containing

sac). Hydrocephalus, a much more common lesion, is excluded by their definition.

The clinical features of each type of cystencephalus are given in some detail and there are full case reports of four infants with hydromencephalus. One of the five chapters is devoted to the diagnosis of these conditions, and a plea is made for the more frequent use of transillumination of the skull in infants with signs of brain damage. Another chapter is concerned with the abnormal physiological responses—disturbance of sleep rhythm, absence of temperature control, etc.—in patients with hydranencephalus.

The work is of more interest to the paediatrician than to the pathologist. It is only in the last chapter that some interesting anatomical findings in some cases of hydranencephalus are discussed. These include descriptions of abnormal decussation of pyramidal fibres and some data concerning the absence of certain centres in the damaged brain.

There is a modest bibliography referring to hydromencephalus, and the references to hydroanencephalus include a clinical and pathological summary of the cases so far reported.

The book is well illustrated and many of the plates are in full colour. It is the illustrations which would be the chief interest for the pathologist. The subtitles to the various figures are rendered in German, English, and Russian, and a summary of the monograph is also available in these languages.

A. E. CLAIREAUX

KLINISCHE CHEMIE: THEORIE UND PRAXIS By R. Richterich. (Pp. xii + 448; illustrated.) Basel and New York: S. Karger. 1965.

This book is very interesting. It is, however, in German which diminishes its general utility. The work is a textbook on a special field of analytical chemistry with a valuable discussion of some of the theoretical aspects of the methods described. There is very little medicine in the book, apart from details of the normal values to be found for various investigations, and the latter are better discussed than they are in most works in English. The great value of the book lies in the methods, many of which demand only 0.02 ml. of specimen; as the tendency is towards micro-techniques this makes the collection particularly useful.

For anybody who reads German and is concerned with the field of hospital chemical pathology, the book is well worth having.

ARTHUR JORDAN

BROADSHEETS

The list of Broadsheets published for the Association of Clinical Pathologists will in future be found on the inside back cover of the Journal. Kindly note revised prices and where orders should be placed.