

underlying biochemical lesion when this is known. The number of metabolic disorders which are, or may be associated with mental retardation—many of them at least potentially amenable to treatment—will come as a surprise to the majority of readers. Though not a book to be read from cover to cover because its high factual content makes it somewhat indigestible, it is one that deserves to be on the shelf adjacent his elbow of every practising clinical pathologist who, however infrequently, is ever consulted about the investigation of children who are known to be, or merely suspected of being, mentally retarded. Under these circumstances the clinical pathologist will find that it enables him to give help where all too often in the past he felt quite unable to do so.

V. MARKS

HISTOCHEMISTRY, THEORETICAL AND APPLIED By A. G. Everson Pearse. 3rd. ed., Vol. 1. (Pp. 736; illustrated. 130s.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1968.

Someone has noted how difficult it is to write a critical review without showing off. The trouble here is that Professor Pearse's new edition merits a critical review in the better sense of the adjective, but even to attempt it would need knowledge available to few and certainly not to your reviewer. *Faute de mieux*, he may comment on its value to the working pathologist.

For example, the chapter on fluorescent antibody methods is a readable, interesting, concise and objective survey of a field where practising pathologists may soon find themselves, and be grateful to Pearse. Their needs are not neglected, and distinction between utilitarian necessities and rarified research is clearly in his thought. Thus, although he notes that amyloid preserves many of its staining properties even 'after passage through the gastrointestinal tract of the mouse', he later comments: 'Resistance to enzyme attack is not usually used as a diagnostic criterion in the applied histochemistry of amyloid.' His honesty is patent and unaggressive; for example, in referring to Puchtler and Sweat's 1966 paper on the history of amyloid he writes: 'This paper clears up many of the misunderstandings, some of them repeated by me in previous editions, derived from incomplete study or imperfect translation of the original works.' Strangely enough, like so many writers on amyloid, he seems to ignore Fahr's view (1925) that amyloid's staining reactions alter as it ages.

Another curious omission is any suggestion that the suitability of basic fuchsin for the preparation of Schiff's reagent might be related to its chemical structure. Admittedly Con (1961) thought basic fuchsin's exact chemical nature of comparatively little importance to histochemists. In our laboratory we have no doubt that pararosanilin (Magenta O, Basic Red 9, C.I. 42500) supplied by Ciba (USA) as Fuchsine N gives a much better result for Schiff or aldehydefuchsin than any other basic fuchsin; they may all be contaminated with some of their more or less methylated cousins but Ciba's Fuchsine N is outstandingly different.

Generally the instructions are concise and clearly given in the valuable appendices, although too brief on Wolman's method (p. 695), especially as there is dubiety about the reference, and on the Fettrot method (p. 697)

where the solvent is not mentioned. As in earlier editions, he usually states his preferences firmly, although on pages 414, 415, and 441 there is some uncertainty about his assessment of Fettrot against Oil Red.

The illustrations are better than before, and some of the histochemical methods in colour are now a real pleasure to study. The few misprints are less misleading than the transposition of subscripts on plates V and IX. Also sad to see (plate IIIc subscript) is end-of-the-line splitting of paraffin into: para-ffin. (Uncultured disarticulation has its entertaining side even if improper editorially; one of my sharp-eyed colleagues recently culled from journals other than this: che-motherapy and polyri-bosomes. Antime-tabolites have perhaps still to appear in print.)

The working pathologist and the good technician will both wish to have this book near their bench for practical purposes, and can be sure of interest and stimulus from the thought that has gone to the making of Pearse's Third Edition, Volume I.

A. C. LENDRUM

HANDBUCH DER HAUT—UND GESCHLECHTSKRANKHEITEN Erster Band/Erster Teil—Normale und Pathologische Anatomie der Haut I. Edited by J. Jadassohn. (Pp. 1137; illustrated. \$123.50) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1968.

The present volume is the first of three volumes which, when complete, will constitute a uniquely thorough survey of the histology and histopathology of the skin. This is, of course, a multiple author work and the text is divided almost equally between German and English. The first 780 pages cover in remarkable detail the histology of the normal skin, including histochemistry, electron microscopy, and embryology. The remaining 300 pages are devoted to general pathological processes as they affect the skin and we have to await the appearance of the next two volumes for the sections on the special pathology of skin diseases.

There can be no doubt that this handbook will be invaluable, both for its own sake and for the comprehensive references to the literature which it includes, to all whose special interests include the histology and histopathology of the skin and related structures.

T. CRAWFORD

LECTURE NOTES ON BACTERIOLOGY By R. R. Gillies. (Pp. 188. 20s.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1968.

This short book is aimed at helping the medical student by replacing his own notes as a background to lectures on bacteriology and will no doubt be read by many immediately before examinations. It is an account of systematic bacteriology presented briefly and readably but the author could with advantage have gone further in highlighting points of importance to clinical doctors and in cutting out material of little relevance to them. For example, the cultural characteristics of *Cl. botulinum* and other Clostridia are described in some detail but there is no mention of anaerobic streptococci or bac-