

Book reviews

SARCOIDOSIS By J. G. Scadding. (Pp. 542; illustrated. 7 gns.) London: Eyre and Spottiswoode Ltd. 1967.

In November 1937 Professor Snapper of Amsterdam gave two notable lectures on 'Pseudotuberculosis in man' in the University of London; the first dealt with 'Besnier-Boeck's disease', the second with 'Regional ileitis'. Snapper's account of sarcoidosis captivated the interest of a young chest physician and now, after 30 years of clinical experience, Professor Scadding has provided us with a masterpiece, for this monograph is a perfect blend of personal clinical knowledge with an informed appraisal of the work of others and covers every aspect of the disease.

It would be wrong to suggest that only certain chapters of this book will be of value to pathologists, for it is just as important that he should understand the natural history of pulmonary sarcoidosis as the significance of the Kveim reaction; nevertheless two of the most thought-provoking chapters are those on immunology and aetiology, for these are the aspects of this disease that engender most discussion.

In the chapters on immunology and the Kveim reactions, the facts are set out and these are reviewed in the light of all the other evidence in the discussion on aetiology. Having presented objectively the evidence in support and against each of the aetiological theories, Professor Scadding concludes that his personal viewpoint 'at the time of writing' is that 'the majority of cases of sarcoidosis seen in England are related to *M. tuberculosis* infection. It seems possible that in such cases the sarcoidosis is a response to an antigen or antigen antibody complex associated with the myo-bacterial infection in a subject with a special sort of alteration of reactivity', and then goes on to suggest that, from a long term epidemiological point of view, the disease might be regarded as a feature of the late stages of a tuberculous epidemic in a population. These views would be shared by the majority of those who have studied the disease in all its aspects and would, if anything, be substantiated by the recent reports of the simulation of the disease in guinea pigs injected with sarcoid

material. It is unnecessary to say that the book is a pleasure to read and the illustrations, whether of photo-micrographs, radiographs, or clinical manifestations are of very high quality.

A. H. T. ROBB-SMITH

HORMONES IN BLOOD 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Edited by C. H. Gray and A. L. Bacharach. (Pp. xvii + 577; illustrated. 150s.) London and New York: Academic Press. 1967.

This volume covers chapters 1-10 of the first edition 'Peptide hormones and thyroid hormones', with additional chapters on Sephadex chromatography, immunoassay, and hypothalamic-releasing factors. Each hormone is treated in a separate chapter, usually by a different author, with accounts of its occurrence, chemical properties, methods of analysis, and of the factors, both physiological and pathological, affecting its plasma concentrations.

On average a third of each chapter is devoted to analytical methods. This is, however, no laboratory manual. There are concise assessments of the potentials of the different available methods: the kind of information one needs for choosing a method or for assessing the value of published results. There is occasional unnecessary analytical detail which the editors might have cut out. Comparison of the first and second editions illustrates the degree to which radioimmunoassay methods are replacing bioassay for the peptide hormones. The difficulties of radioimmunoassay are well brought out in chapter 2 and besides the well-known problems of obtaining pure hormone and of raising antibodies there are others of species specificity and of the separation of biological and immunological activities in fragmented peptides. This chapter is disappointingly brief on methods of raising antibodies but the authors point out that little critical work has been done.

The sections devoted to blood levels in different physiological and pathological states are admirably clear and will provide a much needed reference source for the chemical pathologist.

Many of the authors describe the physiological properties of the hormones with, in one or two cases, detailed accounts of the biochemical mechanism of action. These sections are very uneven: there has been no attempt to review work on the actions of insulin and the thyroid hormones (which is understandable) but what a shame that Dr Lorraine did not take the opportunity, in his most authoritative review of gonadotrophins, to clear up what is to most of us a very confusing field (not helped by the nomenclature—HPG, HCG, PMG, FSH, ICSH, LH, LTH!).

One is only occasionally made aware of the multiple authorship, for example, prolactin and growth hormone are dealt with separately, and the area of overlap needs careful reading in both chapters to dispel the first impression of conflict.

The book concludes with a new chapter giving a clear account of hypothalamic-releasing factors (although the data on plasma concentrations of these is almost confined to rats).

In summary the book contains a wealth of material on the chemistry, analysis, and plasma concentrations of hormones (mainly polypeptides) with accounts of the physiological actions of most of them. It is well produced with a pleasing uniformity of style and will appeal to all who are interested in polypeptide hormone analysis or the interpretation of plasma concentrations of these hormones.

M. J. LEVELL

LECTURE NOTES ON PATHOLOGY 2nd ed. By A. D. Thomson and R. E. Cotton. (Pp. xvi + 1138. £3 3s.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd. 1968.

This is something of a cross between a time table and an aide memoire. It could be valuable to aged pathologists collecting their thoughts for a differential diagnosis or a lecture, likewise to younger ones priming their mental tanks for the Primary. It might be useful as a mentor to already well informed students focusing on an examination, but not as substitute for a textbook.

It is good to see the kidney of subacute bacterial endocarditis now recognized as not embolic, although it is still under that heading. The term 'neoplasm' has not yet sufficiently replaced 'tumour' when neoplasms are being described, and it is shocking to see sterolosis of the gall-bladder called cholesterosis (p. 834). Neither chemical nor enzyme appear in the index; admittedly phosphatase and acid phosphatase do, but alkaline phosphatase and transaminase are missing.

The terse telegraphic style and clear arrangement make it easy to see omissions; errors of commission are rare but the didacticism gives a spurious validity to views still debatable. The older reader will sense and accept this, appreciating the gain of new chapters on genetics, immunology, electrolyte balance, and exfoliative cytology. None the less users of the book (until such time as they can telephone the computer) would be better served by a stronger chemical slant and a more compendious and exact index.

This edition merits a place on the shelf of the working pathologist, beside the dictionary. Not that you need the latter, gentle reader, but the day comes when confidence-stealing doubts cripple your