In a timely attempt to clarify discussion on the possible precursors of carcinoma, including endometrial hyperplasia, a plea is made for simplification of the terminology and variable meanings so often used in description. The occurrence in young women of endometrial carcinoma is documented and the danger of mistaking certain specimens of secretory endometrium for carcinoma is illustrated.

Each section has many useful new references and a number of excellent photomicrographs appear in all parts of this supplement; although it is an atlas many readers will find the new discussions and references at least as useful as the illustrations.

MAGNUS HAINES

Diabetes and the Eye By F. I. Caird, A. Pirie, and T. G. Ramsell. (Pp. x + 230; illustrated. 63s.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1969.

For some time there has been a growing need for such a book as this. In recent years there has been a surge of interest in the ocular manifestations of diabetes, stimulated largely by their ever increasing prevalence in the population. As a result a considerable wealth of information has accrued, dispersed amongst the equally increasing number of scientific journals. While there have been several excellent reviews dealing with selected aspects, there has not been, until now, any comprehensive attempt to summarize the new data and to evaluate current thinking on the subject as a whole.

Any attempt therefore to fill this gap is to be welcomed, and, when it is as successful as is this treatise, the authors are to be particularly congratulated. Treating their subject in a stimulating academic manner, they have presented their material fairly, reasoned with objectivity and written with clarity. As might be expected coming from a physician, a biochemist, and an ophthalmologist the book is wide in its scope and deals fairly comprehensively with all aspects of the diabetic eye, of particular merit being the sections dealing with the epidemiology of visual disturbance in diabetes, the natural history and clinical features of diabetic retinopathy, and lens metabolism in relation to cataract formation. Disappointingly the sections concerned with the pathology of the various disorders are rather less satisfying for the pathologist, lacking the incisive critical comment which typifies most other parts of this otherwise excellent book.

In summary, this is a quite laudable attempt to cover a still developing field, managing to cram a vast amount of information into somewhat less than 200 pages,

and can be recommended without reservation.

A. GARNER

A Short Textbook of Chemical Pathology By D. N. Baron. (Pp. xi + 211; illustrated. Hardback, 35s; paperback, 22s.) London: English Universities Press. 1969.

This book represents the second edition of 'Essentials of chemical pathology', first published in 1957 and subsequently reprinted six times with only minor corrections. The general format of the first edition is retained, and such a record of past success is an indication of the popularity likely to be enjoyed by the second edition, particularly if one accepts the claim, stated in the preface, that this book meets the needs in chemical pathology of medical students, of doctors in general, and of a variety of workers preparing for specialist or professional qualifications (Primary MCPATH, MSc and Mastership in Clinical Biochemistry, AIMLT and HNC in chemical pathology).

Chemical pathology has developed greatly in the last 12 years and it is perhaps too much to hope that a book of this length could provide adequately for the needs of the wide range of readers listed in the previous paragraph. The assessment of renal tubular function, the investigation of intestinal malabsorption, the range of tests based on the determination of steroid hormones and their metabolites, and the selection and interpretation of enzyme activity measurements in serum are some examples of important subjects which are rather lightly treated, and which will require further study by all the categories of reader for whom the book sets out to cater.

It is a pity that the book has been renamed a 'Textbook'. This has presumably been done so as to render the book more easily recognizable as part of the series from the same publishers, but this has resulted in a less accurate title than the original 'Essentials'. The book can be recommended as an introduction to chemical pathology, but some of the author's descriptions of established procedures constitute current personal assessments with which other chemical pathologists and clinical biochemists might well disagree. For instance, urine specific gravity and creatinine clearance determinations are described as complex; protein-bound iodine determinations are rated as technically tedious; and insulin-induced hypoglycaemia is designated as a semi-research procedure. It would be a pity if these and some other assessments of widely accepted procedures were to create a reluctance on the part of doctors to ask for valid and valuable diagnostic tests. There are several small errors, some typographical and

others errors of fact, which should be corrected when the book is reprinted. The sales of the first edition allow one to predict that the present edition will also have wide appeal.

L. G. WHITBY

Some Inherited Disorders of Brain and Muscle Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium of the Society for the Study of Inborn Errors of Metabolism. Edited by J. D. Allan and D. N. Raine. (Pp. viii + 154; 54 figures, 6 tables. 40s.) Edinburgh and London: E. and S. Livingstone Ltd. 1969.

This excellent little volume records the papers and discussions of yet another Symposium held under the auspices of the Society for the Study of Inborn Errors of Metabolism 1967. There were 13 main contributors whose topics included muscular dystrophy, skeletal muscle glycosinosis, the lipidoses, and Wilson's disease.

Some of the papers are excellent and reasonably complete, some could have been extended with pleasure to the reader, while one was given to a meeting other than the one recorded. The clinician, the histologist, and the biochemist are all catered for; however, the reproduction of some of the histological preparations could have been better.

This book will be read with interest and profit by many workers in this field.

J. N. CUMINGS

Isolation and Identification of Drugs Edited by E. G. C. Clarke. (Pp. xxii + 870. £14.) London: The Pharmaceutical Press. 1969.

Everyone who has had anything to do with drug toxicity in the last 25 years knows what a remarkable man E. G. Clarke is—industrious, academically minded, practical, prolific in idea and execution. First Professor in Chemical Toxicology to the University of London, he has wide acclaim as a world authority, and few would have the temerity to challenge in his field.

Combine with this editorial pen those of such experts as Curry, Jackson, Chapman and Moss, Daglish, Fox *et al* in their particular fields and you have a remarkable panel whose combined skills could hardly be exceeded anywhere in the world. The result is a remarkably compact 165-page guide to analysis by the current sophisticated techniques—screening, extraction, paper, thin-layer and gas-chromatography, u-v and i-v spectrophotometry, colour and micro-crystal tests. Never has so practical a guide to the difficult problem of the extraction and identification of drugs been so authoritatively set out for those in pathology and analytical chemistry, for whom this problem has been such a test of laboratory skill.

The middle and latter thirds of the book comprise a detailed dictionary, occupying another 650 pages, of analytical data from Acepifylline to Yohimbine, with MP and Rf values, u-v maxima, i-v peaks and characteristic spectra, reagent data—and a very full bibliography. It is a remarkable book: a vade mecum every analytical chemist and toxicologist *must* have at his elbow. It is, indeed, the only really full and authoritative guide in this difficult field, of equal importance to both clinical and postmortem toxicologists. The price is immaterial.

KEITH SIMPSON

Diagnostic Uses of Radioisotopes in Medicine Edited by P. A. Anderson (Pp. 1040; illustrated. 15s.) London: Hospital Medical Publications Ltd. 1969.

The journal *Hospital Medicine* is by now a familiar source of general information. This is the first book in a series presenting contributions, brought up to date where necessary, already published in the journal by authors well known in their various fields. An introductory article (H. I. Glass) sets the isotopic scene. Other chapters cover thyroid disorders (A. W. G. Goolden), brain disorders (W. B. Jennett), haematology (S. M. Lewis and L. Szur), body composition studies (E. S. Williams), calcium metabolism (B. E. C. Nordin), gastroenterology (D. N. Croft), blood flow (N. Veall), renal function (A. M. Joekes), and skeletal scintigraphy (V. R. McCready).

The authors succeed admirably within the scope of 100 pages in conveying the essentials of their subjects, and the book is recommended to those wishing to improve their general knowledge of diagnostic techniques using radioisotopes.

C. B. CAMERON

Laboratory Aids in Diagnosis of Cancer By Cornelia Hoch-Ligeti. (x + 123. \$9.50.) Springfield, Illinois. Charles C. Thomas. 1969.

It is tempting to condemn this book on the Editor's foreword alone: 'Cancer is a striking process of cell anarchy distinguished by autonomy and anaplasia with total disregard for normal limitations of growth, and complete loss of normal organisation and function. The malignant cells brutally ride roughshod...', but that might be unfair on the author who seems to have a more realistic view of neoplasia. Certainly her aim 'to review the main trends from 1955 to 1968 in ancillary diagnosis of cancer' is a good one and her conclusions are never too dogmatic.

The content includes chromosome analysis, various aspects of chemistry,

immunology, and histology; a brief mention of lymphography, mammo-graphy, and thermography; and a very selective glance at isotope scanning.

Sixty-eight pages allow only a very condensed account of any technique (why then waste a page on ABO blood groups?) but full references to review articles are some compensation for lack of detail. In some sections the information is already out of date, eg, the significance of the Australia antigen, and Astaldi's revised data on PHA-responsiveness in chronic lymphatic leukaemia. Chromosome changes in acute leukaemia are scarcely mentioned and the production of lysozyme by the cells of monocytic leukaemia is omitted. In other sections a critical value judgement would have been welcome. For example, should one have to pay any attention to the Rand 3-D test? And what certain conclusions can be drawn from the mass of work on circulating malignant cells?

With these reservations the book has some value in indicating what has happened in the field of cancer diagnosis and where to find out about it.

H. E. M. KAY

Handbook of Plastic Embedding By E. L. Lutz, Snr. (Pp. v + 192; illustrated. Hardback, \$5.95; paperback, \$3.95) Healdsburg, California: Naturegraph Publications. 1969.

The art of resin embedding is a fascinating one which yields tremendous scope for the hobbyist and commercial producer alike. Such persons and others have long awaited a comprehensive handbook on the various methods and problems of plastic embedding for all types of objects—animals and plants included. Drawing upon a life time of experience and practise the author has produced a monograph of invaluable information.

Regrettably the text suffers by being both dull and, at times, padded; the photographic illustrations are poor and the diagrams suffer considerably from poor layout and quality of reproduction, those on page 151 (paperback) being the classic example.

The discerning reader, however, taking his time, will find a vast amount of useful information, although as the 192-page paperback costs 33s, he may not always feel that he is getting value for money. A more carefully prepared second edition is obviously justified.

IAN HUNTER

Letter to the Editor

Reconditioned Laboratory Equipment

Since November 1966, 400 consignments of reconditioned medical and surgical equipment and hospital sundries have been shipped to the developing countries by the Joint Mission Hospital Equipment Board.

This Organization, sponsored by representative British missionary societies and charitable organizations, is recognized officially as an avenue of disposal for redundant hospital equipment. The Board is non-profit making but has to pass on its operative costs.

Requests for laboratory equipment are now becoming more numerous as medicine overseas develops from its earlier somewhat primitive beginning.

This development coincides with the growing sophistication of equipment used in hospital and other laboratories of the UK, and the consequent freeing of simple equipment which once seemed adequate.

The more sophisticated equipment would often be unsuited to the requirements of a hospital where means of controlling ambient temperature and humidity are not available, but many laboratories have equipment which they no longer use, stored in cupboards or on shelves. This equipment would give years of useful service in mission and other charitable hospitals overseas.

If your readers have such equipment the J.M.H.E.B. would be glad to receive it and service it as necessary before despatching it.

R. W. BOVANN

Joint Mission Hospital Equipment Board,
124 Spa Road, Bermondsey
London, SE 16

Notice

Royal College of Pathology

The College moved into its new premises at 2 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1 on 12 May.