

## Book reviews

**Neuroectodermal Tumours of the Central and Peripheral Nervous System** By K. Scharenberg and L. Liss. (Pp. ix + 239; illustrated. £10.) Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone Ltd. 1969.

If the senior author of this monograph appears to do less than justice to conventional staining methods, he is to be excused because of his enthusiasm for the silver techniques with which the name of his mentor, the late Don Pio del Rio Hortega, will always be associated. Indeed the importance of this tome lies in the fact that these important techniques have been employed exhaustively—but not exclusively—in a study of 4,000 tumours of the nervous system. It will appeal particularly to pathologists and surgeons who are concerned with clinical and research aspects of neuro-oncology. When they compare their own findings with those of the authors, they may even be tempted to depart from some conventional teachings which have tended to neglect important writings of the Spanish school, so often buried as they are, in inaccessible journals.

These talented authors naturally base their classification of neoplasms on that of Hortega but differ a little from Polak's recent modification (1966). They show with some conviction that 'medulloblastomas' are in fact neuroblastomas of the cerebellum and that their cerebral counterparts (usually called ganglioneuromas) do not contain gliomatous elements ('gangliogliomas') as others have postulated in some instances. They found no examples of sarcomatous change in the stroma of any of their cases of glioblastoma and they tend to discount the likelihood of there being such a tumour as a 'gliosarcoma'. More surprising is the fact that, not doubting the existence of such a tumour, they met with no instance of a 'microglioma' (with which they would not in any case be concerned in this book although Polak included them in his classification). Their challenging technical approach throws interesting light on the natural history and structure of Schwannomas, Remak cell tumours in von Recklinghausen's disease, haemangioblastomas, gliomas of the optic nerve, tumours containing the elements of Fänanas, pinealomas, and the hamartomas and blastomatous processes met with in tuberose sclerosis, but their assessment

of the spongioblastoma polare would appear to be at variance with the generally accepted view, supported by findings in tissue culture, of Russell and Rubinstein (1963).

A particularly useful chapter deals with the value as well as the shortcomings of tissue culture in diagnosis. There is too a technical section designed to tempt the routine worker into the fuller histological life. The innumerable illustrations are mostly good and some excellent; particularly interesting are the revealing phase contrast photographs of gliomas stained with silver carbonate. The text is set out with little regard to economy of paper but it is eminently readable in spite of the use of such words as 'silver-affine', 'semi-oval center', 'dynamic gliology', 'tumorigenic', and 'cariokinesis'. If at times statements are a little dogmatic they are none the less pleasingly provocative. The paper is heavy yet some illustrations are poor or is it the reproduction? On a few pages the text shows through on to the illustrations to the detriment of both; when reprinted it is hoped that this annoyance will be eradicated.

W. H. MCMENEMEY

**Tumors of the Peripheral Nervous System** By J. C. Harkin and R. J. Reed. Atlas of Tumor Pathology, Second series, Fascicle 3. (Pp. 174; 196 figures. \$3.25.) Washington: The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. 1969.

This is a worthy successor to the slim but authoritative fascicle by the late A. P. Stout. It has trebled in size and in the number of illustrations including a considerable amount of new material and covers the subject fully.

Both the solitary benign tumours of nerve sheaths and the various manifestations of neurofibromatosis receive full treatment. The terminology adopted is admirable, in particular the use of the term Schwannoma in preference to the numerous more elegant but ambiguous alternatives. The differences between Schwannoma and neurofibroma are well explained with the aid of diagrammatic drawings. Syndromes related to, but not identical with, von Recklinghausen's disease are well described and defined. The difficult subject of malignant nerve sheath tumours is clearly presented and an adequate classification proposed. The borderland between nerve sheath and melanotic tumours remains as obscure as ever. The

neuroblastic and neuronal tumours are well reviewed and their terminology clarified. A clear statement on their sites of origin, including atypical ones, would be desirable: a curious omission. The chapter on 'Tumours of other tissues secondarily involving the peripheral nervous system' is so perfunctory it could have been omitted altogether.

The standard of illustrations is very high throughout. Lists of references at the end of each chapter provide a useful survey of recent work; however, they are rarely quoted in the text which makes correlation between statements and their original sources difficult. These are, however, minor flaws in an authoritative and up-to-date monograph.

H. URICK

**Fibrinolysis. Chemistry, Pathology and Clinics** By Y. P. Kontinen. (Pp. 643; 13 figures. No charge.) Tampere, Finland: Oy STAR Ab.

This is an extraordinary book and thus merits an unusual review. To begin with it was published in Finland in 1968 as a limited edition available free of charge. Secondly it reflects the monumental labours of its author whilst preparing a thesis—evidently a typical Scandinavian saga for which no stone remained unturned and no reference overlooked. The result is a 640-page 'Bradshaw' on fibrinolysis, of which the last 200 pages are devoted to over 4,500 references: every paragraph is festooned with superscript figures.

The literature of each aspect of fibrinolysis is surveyed. To record that the book is unreadable, though in almost impeccable English, is not to be disrespectful to the author for this work was never intended to be read. It is a comprehensive reference text and is only intelligible—indeed only of value—to someone immersed in the subject who, like the author, seeks to write a thesis. Many British graduates, if they can obtain a copy, will be grateful to Dr Kontinen, and his patient wife who sustained her husband during the years spent on accumulating all these data, for passing on to others the results of his own labour. Every fact is presented but without eclecticism; the reader must make his own judgment and the author's thoughts and experiences remain hidden. This is fair enough when relating parallel or divergent theories, but reduces the value of the textual references to laboratory methodology.

The introductory chapters on fibrinogen and the plasminogen-plasmin system and on physiology are well presented, but the chapter on 'Hyperfibrinolysis and fibrinolytic haemorrhages' makes heavy weather in attempting to clarify something that cannot yet be so disciplined. There are 30 pages on fibrinolytic therapy and here failure to extract the good from the bad is a particular disadvantage—the list of lytic agents and activators is certainly comprehensive.

This book is intended as a source of specialized information; as such it can be thoroughly recommended and research laboratories should apply for a copy while the generous offer by the publishers (a firm of Finnish pharmaceutical manufacturers) remains open. But anyone wishing to learn about fibrinolysis from scratch must seek elsewhere.

J. L. STAFFORD

**A Short Synopsis of Human Protozoology and Helminthology** 2nd ed. By L. R. S. Macfarlane. (Pp. 259; 61 figures. £2.50) Edinburgh and London: E. and S. Livingstone. 1970.

The second edition of this useful volume has been called for and has been produced in workman-like style. The book grew out of notes used for teaching the Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene and the abbreviated style of writing is accounted for by this, but it is still acceptable in what is primarily a laboratory guide and reference manual.

The material is covered fully and is up to date; new aspects of parasitology are dealt with in considerable detail. An innovation in this edition is the introduction of brief references to drugs used in the treatment of parasitic infections. The wisdom of this step is open to doubt. Many would argue that instructions regarding therapy should either be in full or omitted altogether, for therapy unless properly carried out, can be against the patient's interests, may confuse the diagnosis, and make appropriate management in the future difficult or impossible.

As a guide to human protozoology and helminthology the book can be thoroughly recommended.

A. W. WOODRUFF

**Clinical Acid-base Physiology** By P. Kildberg. (Pp. 228; 61 figures. £4.37½) Copenhagen and Baltimore: Scandinavian University Books. 1968.

This work is a monograph which sets out the results of the author's studies in the field of acid-base disorders in childhood, especially in premature infants; in addition to this the author attempts to give a comprehensive survey of the achievements of clinical acid-base physiology.

The whole field of these disturbances has been the subject of many studies in the paediatric field. There can be no questioning of the great need for a clear exposition of the underlying facts and principles set out with a simplification of terminology and an avoidance of abbreviations. Unfortunately, the present monograph observes neither of these prescriptions.

It may be a matter of regret that the present work can only be called confusing: it is often difficult to discern any guiding thread. For anybody already specialized in the field the author's results are obviously of interest and importance and the review of the literature, up to 1967, is very complete. Apart from these two facets the book is not to be recommended.

A. JORDAN

**Clostridia of Wound Infection** By A. T. Willis. (Pp. ix + 470; illustrated. £8.) London: Butterworths and Co. Ltd. 1969.

The author's aim, in a book addressed primarily to clinical bacteriologists, is to provide an up-to-date review of the clostridia of wound infection. An introductory chapter, mainly devoted to the discussion of nomenclature and classification, is followed by three long chapters on the main gas gangrene pathogens and four shorter ones on more doubtful pathogens or those likely to confuse the uninitiated. In all these accounts the author concentrates on the cultural characters and toxicology of the clostridia and more or less leaves metabolism to the biochemists. A chapter on anaerobic infections rather surprisingly includes a full account of *Clostridium welchii* food poisoning, but concentrates on the clinical pathology and management of gas gangrene and the less common clostridial infections. A final chapter is devoted to the clinical and laboratory aspects of tetanus.

The reference lists are remarkably comprehensive and take up virtually one third of the whole book. An unusual feature is the inclusion of long excerpts from papers in the literature. Many of these are apt original descriptions of interesting events or phenomena. Not

every clinical bacteriologist, perhaps, would be very interested in, say, a half page verbatim account of the local lesion produced by *Cl. histolyticum* in the rabbit.

The energetic author mentions that the book was prepared during a somewhat nomadic period of his life. This may explain a fair number of minor lapses in proof correcting, and writing of uneven quality that is occasionally hard to understand. A book that contains such a wealth of material from an acknowledged expert will certainly be used by clinical bacteriologists and deserves a better final polish in these matters of detail and will doubtless be tidied up in another edition.

B. MOORE

**Gynecological Vital Cytology** By P. Stolte. (Pp. 81; 45 figures. \$16.00; DM58.00.) Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York: Springer-Verlag. 1970.

This is a beautifully produced monograph, describing the use of phase-contrast and interference-contrast microscopy in the examination of unstained and unfixed gynaecological secretions, aspirations, and urine.

There are 15 pages of instructions, well and clearly translated into good English from the original German edition. The remaining 66 pages are fine black and white photographs of what can be seen.

The work is not intended for the practising pathologist, and the authors admit that they do not use the technique for searching smears for malignancy. It can, however, be recommended as a primer for anyone interested in glimpsing the vital dynamic world for which pressure of work rarely affords us enough time.

M. LEVENE

**Biochemical Disorders in Human Disease** 3rd ed. By R. H. S. Thompson and I. D. P. Wootton. (Pp. 875; 174 figures. £8.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1970.

The heavy demands of clinicians on the laboratory services have led to an explosion of biochemical knowledge and have cast a heavy responsibility on editors and authors for revising at frequent intervals standard texts of such importance as biochemical disorders in human disease. To avoid extensive growth by accretion the editors have to strike a balance between