Book reviews

Experimental Cardiovascular Diseases By Hans Selye, Vols. 1 and 2. (Pp. xviii, viii + 1155; 73 figures. DM 198, $54.50.) Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York: Springer-Verlag. 1970.

These magnificent volumes, embodying many years of research in experimental cardiovascular disease by Professor Hans Selye and his distinguished colleagues in Montreal University, will be acclaimed everywhere by those interested in this vitally important field. He has integrated personal unpublished work and critical appraisal of the literature (printed in large single-column type), with 5,000 *individual* abstracts from the world literature (in small double-column type), thereby avoiding the painful and inaccurate compromise of trying to summarize several similar, but not identical papers into a single sentence. This idea is very sensible, although it does tend to produce a somewhat 'broken-up' appearance of the text.

Volume 1 includes an historical résumé, followed by a detailed account of the many factors which can actually induce or merely influence cardiovascular disease. The catalogue includes many of the drugs and procedures employed in treating patients, and leaves one questioning what part such agencies may have played in fatal human idopathic myocarditis or other cardiomyopathies.

Volume 2 includes histology, electron microscopy, and histochemistry of the lesions in various organs; chemical and functional changes; and theories concerning the role of the very numerous agencies detailed in the book.

Among countless observations, the most important have been those concerning lesions produced by hormones (catecholamines, corticoids), nutritional factors (cholesterol, vitamins, electrolytes), renal artery constriction and related methods, cardiovascular surgery, infections, and hypersensitivity reactions. Electron microscopy has proved of great assistance and provides some superb illustrations; currently, microsomal enzymes are under investigation.

The work concludes with an alphabetical list of references: these are cited in full, but not paginated, so that one has to locate them in the book via the subject index; fortunately, this is comprehensive, an essential feature if one is to benefit fully from the complex mass of detail concentrated into the book.

The monograph is superbly produced; the illustrations, many in colour, are (with one exception on p. 463) of the highest quality. One is a little envious of the splendid organization, described in the preface, by which the encyclopaedic coverage was achieved—in sharp contrast to the paucity of help endured by most authors in Britain.

The book will certainly become a standard work of reference for all concerned in the study of cardiovascular disease, experimental or clinical; most important, it provides a salutary reminder of the possiblity of iatrogenic agencies causing such illnesses.

R. E. B. HUDSON

Atherosclerosis: Proceedings of the Second International Symposium Edited by Richard J. Jones. (Pp. xxxii + 706; 150 illustrations. £7·60.) Berlin, Heidelberg, and New York: Springer-Verlag. 1970.

This beautifully produced and illustrated volume records the papers and discussions from the Second International Symposium on Atherosclerosis which was held in Chicago in November 1969. It covers a remarkably wide range of types of investigation in the field of arterial disease, embracing all aspects of pathogenesis, morphological and chemical disturbances, nutrition, effects of drugs, epidemiology, and finally programme planning for the control of atherosclerosis.

Naturally, amongst such a large number of papers and contributors there is considerable variation in quality and presentation, but undoubtedly many valuable papers are included. It is pleasant to see a reasonably generous representation of British contributors and to record that their papers rank among the most important in the volume. Amongst so many it is invidious to discriminate, but the contribution from Dr John French, who died so tragically a few months after the meeting, stands out as a model of clarity and originality.

One of the most valuable features of the book is the very extensive bibliography, running to 1,600 papers nearly all of which were published in the 1960s.

A characteristic summary by Dr Hugh Sinclair couched in his well known after-dinner style acts as a suitable aid to the digestion of what is a very weighty contribution to the literature of this subject.

T. CRAWFORD

Hypertension: Causes, Consequences and Management By George Pickering. (Pp. vii + 115; illustrated. £1·75.) London: J. and A. Churchill. 1970.

Sir George Pickering is to be congratulated on producing within such a small compass a really informative and up-to-date account of modern views on the subject of hypertension. It is a remarkable achievement to compress into such a small space a really worthwhile condensation of the matter which he wrote upon so fully in his full-length textbook on high blood pressure published in 1968. He covers physiological aspects of blood pressure control and its disturbances, the pathological consequences of hypertension, and assessment and management of hypertension in the individual patient, in addition to discussing the problems posed by defining hypertension in population groups. This is just the abbreviated account which was wanted for busy workers who are perhaps only marginally involved in this difficult subject. It is unfortunate that, in spite of economies in production, the publishers have found it necessary to charge such a high price.

T. CRAWFORD

Lecture Notes on Haematology By N. G. Hughes-Jones. (Pp. vii + 144; illustrated. £1·50.) Oxford and Edinburgh: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1970.

There has long been a need for a short concise textbook of haematology for medical students. In general, sections on haematology in textbooks of pathology are unsatisfactory and very often misleading. Sections on haematology in textbooks of medicine, if they exist, usually lack a scientific basis. It is unrealistic to expect medical students to read the major textbooks on haematology which are large and too detailed for the normal undergraduate.

Dr. Hughes-Jones has succeeded in filling the gap admirably. He has produced a short and extremely readable book, liberally scattered with pertinent references. This small book is full of interesting ideas.

For example, in addition to giving in detail all the references quoted in the text Dr Hughes-Jones occasionally adds additional references which he thinks would make valuable reading, and at the end of each chapter defines under the heading 'Objectives in learning' those areas on which he feels the student should concentrate. These are chosen with care.