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Book reviews

Neuropathology: Methods and Diagnosis Edited by C. G. Tedeschi. (Pp. xxiv + 874; illustrated. £18.00). Boston: Little, Brown and Co. London: J. and A. Churchill Ltd. 1970.

This expensive book consists of chapters on a wide variety of neuropathological topics mostly by American authors but with some Scandinavian and British participation. It is divided into two main parts, the first entitled 'Essentials' and including chapters on such varying topics as the 'Development of brain and spinal cord', the 'Neonatal neuropathologic examination', 'Histological and histochemical staining methods', and 'Injury of the central nervous system by chemical agents'. Part II is on special methods and is a curious mixture, including 'Morphological study by special methods', 'Museum preparations', and chapters on infectious diseases, prenatal and neonatal neuropathology, and neurochemistry.

In part I the chapters on embryogenesis and gross anatomy are both briefer accounts than can be found in many standard textbooks. That on the neuropathological necropsy ranges through such diverse subjects as necropsy consent, identification of the body, and ascertaining the state of death; it includes brief notes on many disorders which are associated with central nervous abnormalities and a fairly detailed account of examination of the skull and spine. The rather ordinary content of this chapter carries some 360 references, the majority before 1960. The chapter on examination of the brain and spinal cord again includes mention of many miscellaneous disorders but does have a long and well illustrated account of the blood supply of the brain and the pattern of cerebral infarction associated with major vessel occlusion. Chapters on 'Neonatal neuropathologic examination', 'Fixation and selection of blocks for microscopic study', and 'Histological and histochemical staining methods' are again standard accounts. The final two chapters on 'Injury of the central nervous system by physical and chemical agents' draws together information on a wide variety of topics, but mostly again in rather brief and inadequate form.

Part II on special methods includes occasional detailed chapters of interest in which subjects such as radioautography in neuropathology is briefly and competently described but sections on museum preparation, viral, fungal and parasitic infections make curiously incongruous inclusions within one volume. 'Neonatal damage of the central nervous system' is a standard account which one would expect the majority of trainees in pathology to master early in their training and lies next to a short introduction to the 'Chemical basis of central nervous system function in humans' and a detailed account of 'Biochemical parameters of central cholinergic nerves', and a fairly comprehensive account for a volume of this size on the 'Lipid composition of the brain and its subcellular structures'.

The mixture of subjects is unusual and the majority are dealt with inadequately. Most morbid anatomists would prefer to turn to standard anatomy and neuropathology books for the morphological accounts and neurochemists would almost certainly find the specialized chapter on their subject inadequate for their purpose. Indeed it is unlikely that anyone with a special interest in the central nervous system will find much to interest or excite him in any part of this book. The illustrations are on the whole reasonably good and the quality of production of the volume is high but it is hard to imagine that the curious assortment of information presented would appeal to many people at the price for which it is offered.

B. E. TOMLINSON

Plasma Protein Metabolism Edited by Marcus A. Rothschild and Thomas Waldmann. (Pp. xxiv + 560; illustrated. \$15.00). New York: Academic Press Inc. 1970.

This volume includes the loosely connected works of 53 experts in protein catabolism without the help of any continuing thread or selection of which of the many opinions is best based. Like the current plethora of published symposia and multiauthor books, it is therefore for reference only, offering no guidance to the non-expert. For a particular niche in the field of protein metabolism it is likely a Medlars search would be much cheaper and no worse, with probably a better coverage but similarly unsorted and uncriticized.

Part I includes five chapters dealing with 'Model systems and protein iso-

lation'. Over 62 pages, 11 different authors consider largely theoretical models for studying rates of synthesis and catabolism of proteins, with some admirable attempts to prove them, but even the experienced reader will be left bewildered. Freeman's chapter on techniques of protein separation is excellent and a reminder that catabolic assessments can only be as good as the quality of the starting material.

Part II considers the extravascular distribution of albumin, finding on p. 153 a 'discrepancy between direct observations and theoretical calculated values, based on conventional isotopic models', which if confirmed 'renders the multicompartmental model untenable for rats'.

Part III records diurnal rhythms in liver protein metabolism and studies of synthesis at the subcellular level.

Parts IV-IX are a series of papers on the metabolism of albumin, immunoglobulins (including subclasses and fragments), acute phase proteins (especially α_2 and c'_3), blood clotting proteins, lipoproteins, and thyroid hormone-binding proteins.

The volume contains the results of a great deal of work and much valuable opinion, but if you are looking for a book to introduce you to the intricacies of protein metabolism this is not it. The 53 authors seem to have largely written this one for each other.

J. R. HOBBS

Combined Antibiotic Sensitivity Tests

As Professor L. P. Garrod has now retired the service operated at Hammer-smith Hospital has now been transferred to University College Hospital, London, where Dr Joan Stokes and Miss Pamela Waterworth have agreed to carry out combined antibiotic sensitivity tests on request.