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The September 1972 Issue

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Letters to the Editor

Book reviews

Copies are still available and may be obtained from the PUBLISHING MANAGER, BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON, WC1H 9JR, price £1.05

medical technology in modern hospital diagnosis, and undoubtedly this field now supports a very considerable world-wide industry which provides employment for a significant proportion of the world's scientists and technologists.

The appearance of the book is thus significant at this time, and is another milestone to add to others marking the applications of the physical sciences to medicine. In the introductory chapter, an eminent retired physician, Dr Marshall, capably reminisces over the milestones in the field which he has passed since his student days in 1907.

No fewer than seven pages are devoted to a 'Who's Who' of 34 well known clinicians and scientists, who must have been selected with some care, to contribute chapters on subjects ranging from the status of the hospital scientist through descriptions of instruments and techniques to a treatise on the manufacturers' viewpoint.

A book covering such a wide range of interests cannot of course cover any particular aspect in depth, and in this case the editors have achieved what might be called a 'state of the art' survey. It will prove valuable for students, for mature workers in medicine, and also for many interested in manufacture and sales. The book can be recommended both for fire-side reading and for reference purposes.

F. L. MITCHELL

Principles of Biological Chemistry By J. F. Ashby, D. I. Edwards, P. L. Lumb, and J. L. Tring. (Pp. ix + 191; illustrated. £3.00.) Scientific Publications. 1971. Oxford: Blackwell.

This is a volume written primarily for ordinary or higher national certificate science students studying medical laboratory science or applied biology and is intended to deal with the integration of chemistry, biology, and biochemistry. The content of biology is miniscule and the emphasis is clearly on chemistry. Beginning with an elementary introduction to atomic and molecular structure, the authors proceed to outline some of the fundamentals of physical and organic chemistry and conclude with a brief introduction to some of the basic concepts of biochemistry. The treatment throughout is simple and well illustrated, and special attention has been given to practical applications, and to the principles of techniques and methodology. In short, this

new volume makes a suitable primer for the training of junior medical laboratory technicians.

D. V. PARKE

The Planning and Organization of a Health Laboratory Service Fifth report of the WHO Expert Committee on Health Laboratory Services. *World Health Organization Technical Report Series*, 1972, No. 491. (Pp. 36. £0.40.) Available through HMSO, High Holborn, London WC2.

A meeting of experts convened by WHO in November 1971 considered the organization of laboratories in a health service. In a total of 36 pages it is not possible to do more than lay down some very general principles and recommendations although these will be of greatest value in guiding countries where the health service is not fully developed. Clinical pathologists will not find much that they do not already know, but may find it useful as a compressed reference to such matters as training, quality control, and general administrative structure.

H. E. M. KAY

Notices

Availability of Hemiglobincyanide Reference Preparation

An international hemiglobincyanide reference solution is prepared by the Rijks Instituut voor de Volksgezondheid, Bilthoven, the Netherlands, under the auspices of the International Committee for Standardization in Hematology (ICSH)¹. The project is sponsored by the Council of Europe and by the World Health Organization. The latter authority has established the solution as the International Hemiglobincyanide Reference Preparation².

It is available free of charge on request to national laboratories working in haematology or to interested individual workers, and is intended for checking the purity and content of hemiglobincyanide reference solutions to be used in the daily practice of haemoglobinometry.

It consists of an aqueous hemiglobincyanide solution equivalent to a haemoglobin content of approximately 60 mg per 100 ml, dispensed in 10 ml ampoules and packed in boxes of six. It is tested and regularly checked by a number of control laboratories nominated by ICSH.

Further information may be obtained from Dr A. H. Holtz, secretary, ICSH Expert Panel on Haemoglobinometry, Rijks Instituut voor de Volksgezondheid, P.O. Box 1, Bilthoven, the Netherlands.

¹*Brit. J. Haemat.*, 13 (Suppl.), 1967.

²*Wild Hlth Org. techn. Rep. Ser.*, 348, 12, 86 (1968).

Host-Virus Reactions with Special Reference to Persistent Agents

The published proceedings of the Royal College of Pathologists' symposium on 'Host-virus reactions with special reference to persistent agents' will shortly be available from the Publishing Manager, *Journal of Clinical Pathology*, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR, price £2.00 post free. All those who paid the registration fee for the meeting itself will receive a copy of the symposium. For members of the Royal College of Pathologists and members of the Association of Clinical Pathologists there is a concessionary rate of £1.75 post free.