

The book is clearly written but should be read for its authors' personal outlook rather than as a balanced review. For instance, the use of Australia antigen testing in the prevention of posttransfusion hepatitis is dismissed in a few paragraphs although it is the most important practical use of their discovery.

The delay of two years between writing and publication means that the monograph is already somewhat dated. The authors recognize this problem in their Foreword and a supplementary bibliography has been included. However, this contains only a small number of references and it is almost impossible to make use of the list because it is arranged in almost random fashion.

There is no index, a defect which would be mitigated if the Table of Contents were expanded. The photographic figures have not been reproduced adequately and diagrams would have been much more helpful.

Most active workers in the field will want to own this book, despite its high price, but the general reader would be better advised to consult one of the many recent reviews of the subject.

Y. COSSART

**Quantitative Problems in Biochemistry** 5th ed. By Edwin A. Dawes. (Pp. xiv + 470; illustrated. £2.00.) Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1972.

This book has become a classic for many honours students and teachers of biochemistry, and a 5th edition has recently appeared as a paperback at the modest price of £2.00. It provides an admirable account of many aspects of physical biochemistry and includes such topics as molecular weight determinations, acid base relationships, biochemical energetics, equilibria, reaction and enzyme kinetics, manometry, bacterial growth, oxidation reduction potential, and the use of isotopes in biochemistry. The chapter on optical and photometric analysis errs on the elementary side and one might wish that chapters on the techniques and theory of electrophoresis and chromatography had been included. Valuable lists of references and suggested readings, as well as some brief appendices on the graphical solution of problems, symbols, and units, are included. The book is well produced, clearly illustrated, and lucidly written.

As well as being a teaching manual, it can be thoroughly recommended as a reference manual for research biochemists. By working through the illustrated examples in the text as well as answering the questions at the end of each chapter, it is possible to teach oneself an unfamiliar or forgotten quantitative technique.

BARBARA H. BILLING

**Methods and Techniques in Clinical Chemistry** By Paul L. Wolf, Dorothy Williams, Tashiko Tsudaka, and Leticia Acosta. (Pp. xiii + 417; illustrated. £4.80.) Chichester, New York, Sydney, Tokyo, and Mexico City: John Wiley and Sons. 1972.

It is always of interest to read accounts of the technical methods which well known laboratories use in their chemical pathology services. Senior people in most large laboratories will be familiar with most of the techniques, even though the details may vary slightly from method to method. Unfortunately the reasons for the choice of particular methods are not given in any detail and discussion is minimal.

Whilst the book may be of value to those setting up small laboratories it is unlikely to be of value either to scientific staff in large laboratories or those who are working for higher qualifications. There are a number of other books which are available with greater comparative studies of methodology and more discussion, which one would prefer.

M. G. RINSLER

**The Laboratory Aids Series: Antibiotics and Their Laboratory Control** 2nd ed. By M. C. Bryant (Pp. vii + 100; illustrated); **Blood Groups and Techniques** By J. B. Harris (Pp. viii + 71; illustrated); **Diagnostic Procedures in Clinical Bacteriology. The Specimen** By J. D. Jarvis (Pp. viii + 62; illustrated); **Essentials of Microtomy** By S. J. Gray (Pp. x + 90; illustrated); **Histological Methods for Bone** By E. A. Wallington (Pp. ix + 45; 1 figure); **Human Tissue Mucins** By H. C. Cook (Pp. viii + 61; illustrated by formulae). Price 60p each (limp). London: Butterworths. 1972.

Five more titles and a re-edition in this series, which is probably more familiar to

technicians than to pathologists, but which can be studied with interest by both, especially for example, as in 'The specimen', where personal practical knowledge is exemplified. Inevitably the standard is somewhat uneven, but there is an immense volume of knowledge packed away in these small books which can grace the shelves of any stain-etched laboratory bench.

H. E. M. KA

**Clinically Oriented Documentation of Laboratory Data** Edited by E. Gabrieli. (Pp. xiv + 461; illustrated. \$12.50.) New York and London: Academic Press Inc. 1972.

This book contains the proceedings of a conference with the same title as that of the book. It was held in New York in May 1971. Thirty chapters, each by different authors, are contained in a well presented lithograph form. It is moderately priced at \$12.50.

The book is about communicating data between laboratory and clinician and those aspects of information science concerned with the interpretation of those data. It is concerned with clinical chemistry, haematology, and microbiology. The book shows all the signs of the results of effective editing of symposium material. Some contributions are so brief that they are virtually communicated by the title alone. Most are moderate in length. This is probably a reflection of the knowledge of the editor in communicating information.

The chapter on the information content of laboratory data written by the Editor is to my knowledge, the first original article on information science written by a pathologist for laboratory workers.

The following subjects are amongst those dealt with in the book. (1) The objectives of laboratory medicine; (2) The three levels of communication: technical, semantic, and effectiveness (in my opinion 'efficacy' is a better word than effectiveness as used in the book; 'efficacy' means the power to produce an effect); (3) interpretation of multites surveys; (4) normal range of values derived from large-scale multites surveys; (5) evaluation of clinical laboratory computers; (6) data problems in clinical microbiology, haematology, and immunology; (7) the concern of state, community, professional societies with communication of laboratory results.