

contributes towards an interchange between scientists; this is not an unreasonable claim, since it contains a wealth of basic information derived from clinical experience and animal experimentation. In 700 closely printed pages of text, 35 investigators in widely different disciplines present up-to-date reviews of pretty well every aspect of iron in nature. It is all good, factual stuff packed with references—the author index fills 46 pages—with a somewhat daunting opening chapter on inorganic chemistry; there follow reviews of biochemistry of transferrin, ferritin, haem synthesis and catabolism, cytochromes, haem and non-haem iron proteins, and trace metals.

There are separate reviews of absorption, erythropoiesis, and tissue deficiency, the latter being a pertinent reminder of ill-understood aspects not readily attributable to anaemia. The epidemiology and treatment of deficiency, paediatric metabolism, iron in the reticulo-endothelial system, and the overload syndromes are covered; and there is a mathematical essay on kinetics, an erudite description of iron in infection, and, finally, a vignette on genetics that summarizes the effect of four mutants in animals.

It would be invidious to select, by name, the best of such a cosmopolitan group of experts, six of whom are from the Welsh National School, but Professor Allen Jacobs and his colleague Dr M. Worwood are to be congratulated on their editorial as well as their individual contributions.

This reviewer enjoyed his task, though he admits to skipping a few pages. In all this welter of information he had hoped, at last, to glean a grain of truth on the role of haemopexin. Alas, it is missing from the first of two pages indexed, but on the next, the sole reference, and a personal communication, no less, reveals that in normal catabolism the haptoglobin-haemoglobin complex enters the liver parenchymal cells before destruction of the haem, whilst haemalbumin may simply act as a reservoir for haem before it is taken up by the hemopexin (sic) and passes into the hepatocytes. *Exeunt omnes?* For at least one erstwhile student the veil has yet to be lifted, so may we anticipate a second edition of this excellent and, by today's standards, not unduly expensive reference text—surely a 'must' for medical libraries and departments of haematology.

J. L. STAFFORD

Cancer in Childhood. Edited by John O. Godden. (Pp. ix + 249; illustrated.

£10.35.) New York and London: Plenum Publishing Co. Ltd. 1973.

This book, the proceedings of a 'Clinical Conference' in Toronto, represents the experience of established clinicians in the field of paediatric oncology. There is no definitive work on the management of cancer in childhood; this book does not fill the void. However, it does signify that knowledge and know-how in this field are accumulating at an encouraging rate. Subjects dealt with include cancer statistics, nephroblastoma, gonadal tumours, brain tumours, neuroblastoma, rhabdomyosarcoma, and aspects of lymphoma and leukaemia. While most papers represent retrospective analyses of local clinical data, there are papers on prospective trials of therapy from the National Wilm's Tumour Study and Leukaemia Group B. The section on principles of treatment of posterior fossa tumours has been overtaken by the encouraging use of combined therapy in Europe. The United Kingdom contribution to this conference was limited to the statistical report from the Manchester Children's Tumour Registry and a paper on Burkitt's lymphoma.

It is clear from this report that the management of neuroblastoma remains most unsatisfactory. No significant advance in management has occurred other than the recognition of a 'good' neuroblastoma stage IV^s that has an unusually good prognosis, and consequently any treatment offered should not impair this intrinsically better outlook.

Conference reports of wide range have the disadvantage of being unable to cover any topic in depth, and this book is no exception. A reader searching for information on details of treatment, for example, doses and routes of administration, will be disappointed (unless he wishes to know in detail about the radiotherapy of nasopharyngeal angiofibroma). However, this is of no major import as paediatric cancer therapy should not be in the hands of occasional therapists who have to look up doses of drugs.

This book, therefore, is recommended to workers in the field as a record of the Toronto experience and their results in childhood cancer. The leavening from the USA and Europe has been documented adequately elsewhere.

F. HARRIS

Infection with Non-Sporing Anaerobic Bacteria: A Symposium of the British Society of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy.

Edited by Ian Phillips and Max Sussman. (Pp. xii + 234; illustrated. £6.00.) Edinburgh, London and New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1974.

Those who attended this symposium will recall that the detailed information that the contributors produced was so great as to make adequate note-making extremely difficult. The publication of the proceedings in so short a time is therefore particularly welcome. The title of this book is misleading; it covers many more aspects of anaerobic bacteria than the infections they may or may not cause. For the laboratory worker there is useful advice on the isolation of anaerobes from clinical material, with particular reference to techniques, media, and specimen transport, together with up-to-date taxonomic advice on what to call the organisms. The problems of antibiotic sensitivity testing are dealt with in detail, together with the use of the antibiogram as an aid to the identification of some anaerobes. A review of current knowledge of the natural occurrence of various anaerobes and aspects of their metabolic activity that may indirectly affect man concludes the predominantly laboratory-orientated section. The second part of the book deals with clinical aspects of anaerobic infections but retains a strong technical flavour. Infections by anaerobes of the mouth are reviewed, including the relationship that these organisms may have to such conditions as caries, periodontal infection, gingivitis, and halitosis. The accumulated experience of Dr Finegold and his colleagues in the field of anaerobic infections is reviewed in some detail. This useful book is completed by appendices containing suggestions for laboratory equipment and media to aid the successful cultivation of anaerobes, and there are some daunting tables of the principal biochemical activities of various groups of anaerobic bacteria. This book is certain to find a place on the bookshelves of clinical microbiologists.

D. M. JONES

Blood and its Disorders. Edited by R. M. Hardisty and D. J. Weatherall. (Pp. xii + 1540; illustrated; £24.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1974.

The initial impression of this multi-authored text is of an over-priced and excessively bulky addition to a rapidly expanding range of haematology textbooks. With the current trend towards the

monograph, or series of short volumes, who needs a colossus of this type?

Surprisingly, the text achieves a significantly fresh approach to the subject. This is not a reference textbook concerned with minutiae, and there is no attempt to describe all conceivable clinical presentations or laboratory abnormalities in haematology. Instead, the emphasis is on the physiology, biochemistry, and cell biology of haematological disease. This approach is used to provide biological explanations for the clinical features and laboratory abnormalities of day-to-day haematology. The result is a modern presentation which is both logical and readable.

The editors have brought together an impressive group of 33 specialist contributors. The outstanding chapters are those in which the laboratory and clinical aspects of a disease are presented together and by the same author. Where this is not done the unique approach of the book is lost, and there can be irritating overlap between contributors when linked chapters are read in sequence. There is a detailed bibliography up to 1973 only and, owing to a presumed delay in publication, there are now conspicuous deficiencies in areas such as low-dose heparin therapy (one reference) and neutrophil function.

The general theme of the book is an excellent one, however, and will not date prematurely. The editors and contributors have aimed at the postgraduate trainee, and with few exceptions the chapters are ideal for this purpose; there is also considerable uniformity of approach and style for a multi-authored text. The book should be recommended reading for the trainee in haematology, before turning to specialist monographs, and will provide a

lasting understanding of the biological basis of blood disorders. The book should be added to medical undergraduate reading lists for elective studies and is also a very useful source of material for lecture preparation.

The publishers, regrettably, appear to have aimed at a different target. The book has been issued as a prestigious, high-cost edition, and there is inefficient utilization of the printed page owing to over-generous spacing. As a consequence the excessive price, weight, and bulk detract significantly from the readability of this valuable book; the binding is also very fragile. A paperback edition in two volumes should be considered for trainees.

JOHN STUART

Drug Resistance in Antimicrobial Therapy.

By E. J. L. Lowbury and G. A. J. Ayliffe. Publication no. 923, American Lecture Series. A monograph in the Banerstone Division of American Lectures in Living Chemistry. (Pp. xi + 211; illustrated. \$16.75.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1974.

This book deals first with mechanisms and modes of origin of drug resistance, bacterial drug sensitivity tests and their clinical interpretation, and then individual infections, the longest chapters in the book being on those due to staphylococci and Gram-negative bacilli. Tuberculosis has a chapter, followed by one dealing with streptococci, *Neisseria* spp., fungi, and malaria. A thoughtful final chapter defines the principles according to which the emergence of antibiotic resistance can be discouraged. There is much information on the frequency of various

drug resistances in different species, and emphasis on their greater prevalence in hospital environments. Good accounts are naturally given of work in Birmingham on the development of resistance in bacteria infecting burns, including studies of *in vivo* resistance transfer from enterobacteria to *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Although the dominant part played by enzymes in transferable resistance to β -lactam antibiotics is fully recognized, there is no mention of the fact that such resistance to aminoglycosides is also enzymic, the antibiotic being either acetylated or otherwise modified with loss of activity; several such enzymes acting on one or more of these antibiotics are known to exist. A less important omission concerns minocycline. It may not be of much therapeutic significance, but is of theoretical interest, that tetracycline-resistant strains of certain species but not of others are sensitive to minocycline, and so far no explanation of these differences has been forthcoming.

The book is published in an American series described in a Foreword by the general editor as 'charged with the stimulus of chemical wisdom' and aimed at applying advances in chemical knowledge to clinical medicine. Certainly chemistry comes into this subject, but the principles with whose application to medicine it deals are biological rather than chemical. Both laboratory and ward can learn much from its pages, and there are generous reference lists. How does a classical scholar who prefaces the first chapter with an apt quotation from Tertullian react to the (doubtless editorially altered) spelling 'hydrolyze'?

L. P. GARROD