Book reviews

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**Congenital Disorders of Erythropoiesis.**
Ciba Foundation Symposium 37 (new series). (Pp. viii + 408; illustrated. Dfl 68.50; $27.50.) Amsterdam: Excerpta Medica. 1976

This book consists of the papers and subsequent discussion of the Ciba Foundation Symposium held in London in March 1975. The contributors have an international reputation in the investigation of disordered globin chain synthesis and erythroid cell maturation. The book is unique in focusing attention on the refractory anaemias of childhood such as thalassaemia, Fanconi's anaemia, Diamond-Blackfan anaemia, and dyserythropoietic anaemia.

Most of the papers consist of the cellular and molecular biology, electron microscopy, and cytogenticics of these disorders and are written to a very high standard. There are also useful sections on clinical management including androgen and chelation therapy, marrow transplantation, and antenatal diagnosis. This stimulating book is an important source of basic information for paediatric haematologists and for research workers interested in disordered erythropoiesis and its treatment.

**J. STUART**

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There can be few clinical microbiologists who are not acquainted with the earlier scholarly anaerobic writings of Professor Louis Smith, Introduction to the Pathogenic Anaerobes—1955, and the first edition of the work presently under review. That Louis has done it again is clear from every one of the 360 pages of text of this remarkably fine book, which serves both as an authoritative guide for the initiate and as a masterly commentary for the specialist.

After setting the scene of the anaerobic world and giving a brief account of the isolation and generic identification of anaerobic bacteria, Professor Smith devotes 16 chapters to the anaerobic nonsporing bacilli, the anaerobic cocci, the pathogenic and related clostridia, and the anaerobic spirochaetes. An excellent final chapter is concerned with anaerobes in the microflora of the human body. The bibliography contains around 1000 carefully chosen references.

The whole profession, and clinical microbiologists in particular, will be grateful to the author for this comprehensive and readable account of so important a subject. Although the cost seems high this book is unreservedly recommended as essential reading at any price.

**A. T. WILLIS**

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The Schloss Reisenburg Institute was founded by Professor L. Heilmeyer in 1966. In the short span of time since then it has been host to a large number of symposia and workshops which have been successful in fulfilling its founder's purpose to create 'a centre for scientific communication for scientists from all parts of the world'. A workshop on Iron Metabolism and its Disorders in April 1975 brought together some 35 of the world's leading experts on the subject who spent two days in discussing in depth four themes: iron balance; iron deficiency; parenchymal iron overload; and principles of therapy. Each paper or group of papers was followed by discussion which had often reproduced either verbatim or in summary a summarized comment.

Topics of current importance included transferrin-erythroblast interaction, the role of ferritin, and the use of serum ferritin assay as a clinical tool. But after 25 years iron absorption still remains a topic for study, and an extensive paper by H. C. Heinrich gives useful details on the clinical uses of investigation of iron absorption and turnover.

The book was published within eight months of the conference; it is well set out, with an adequate index and few typographical errors. This says much for the skill of the editor and the co-operation of his co-editors, Bothwell, Finch, Heinrich, Jacobs, and Verrier Jones. To judge from the discussions, the conference was stimulating to the participants.

The reader will find in the text useful and up-to-date information and wise advice, which makes it particularly recommendable.

**S. M. LEWIS**