

Book reviews

Handbook of Teratology. Volume I. **General Principles and Aetiology.** (Pp. xi + 476; illustrated; \$46.80.) Volume II. **Mechanisms and Pathogenesis.** (Pp. xi + 491; illustrated; \$46.80.) Edited by J. G. Wilson and F. Clark Fraser. New York and London: Plenum Publishing Corporation. 1977.

These are the first two volumes of a proposed four-volume handbook which is described on the dust jacket as an 'authoritative new treatise'. It is not, and should be regarded as a collection of the views of often distinguished scientists which have been republished in a 'handbook' format. The first volume opens with an historical account of malformations by Warkany which covers similar ground to the opening chapter in the same author's larger text. Other chapters reproduce data available in more detail elsewhere, eg, lists of embryotoxic drugs. The excellent chapter by Edwards and Wanner on thermal injury should surely have been integrated with the section on the effects of 'Radiations and other physical agents', and in general there is evidence of lack of integration of chapters and strict editorial control. Many references to unpublished work are included, surely unsatisfactory in a handbook.

In the second volume some of the chapters of particular interest to pathologists are poor. In one, under a heading 'Malignant transformation in hamartomas', malignant change in familial polyposis coli is included and work on coincidence of malformations and tumours is uncritically presented. The account of the aetiology of congenital heart disease is unbalanced.

It is difficult to know for whom the handbook (which will presumably cost over £100 when complete) is written. Those working in the field will be familiar with what is included, and texts such as Warkany's volume on Malformations will be more useful to most interested pathologists. The later volumes on 'Comparative Maternal and Epidemiologic Aspects' and 'Research Procedures and Data Analysis' may be more useful.

C. L. BERRY

Purine and Pyrimidine Metabolism. Ciba Foundation Symposium 48 (new series) (Pp. xi + 369; 73 figures, 55 tables; \$30.95.) Amsterdam: Excerpta Medica. 1977.

This book contains 17 papers presented at the Ciba Foundation Symposium on Purine and Pyrimidine Metabolism, held in London during June 1976 under the chairmanship of R. W. E. Watts. The symposium focused on the study of two in-born errors of metabolism that have enhanced our understanding of the relationship between neurology and the biochemistry of purine metabolism, and the role of the latter in the immune response. The Lesch-Nyhan syndrome is reviewed with regard to the pathogenesis of brain damage and anaemia resulting from the loss of hypoxanthine-guanine phosphoribosyl transferase activity. The genetic deletion of adenosine deaminase giving rise to severe combined immunodeficiency disease is discussed in several papers concerned with the role of purine metabolism in lymphocyte function. The discussion sections following each paper and 24 pages of general discussion at the end have been well referenced. This book is highly recommended for providing a critical appraisal of current knowledge regarding the regulation of purine and pyrimidine metabolism in man.

J. F. SMYTH

Pathology of Tumours of the Nervous System. 4th edition. By Dorothy S. Russell and Lucien J. Rubinstein. (Pp. vi + 448; illustrated; £25.) London: Edward Arnold. 1977.

It is 20 years since the first edition of this book was published, and the content of the latest edition reflects the considerable increase in knowledge that has taken place during that time. Indeed, the production of this fourth edition became necessary because of advances that have been made in the field of neuro-oncology in the last seven years since the publication of the third edition.

Certain chapters have therefore undergone extensive revision, particularly those concerned with the experimental production of neural tumours, involvement of the nervous system by leukaemia and malignant lymphoid tumours, and the hormonal aspects of pituitary tumours. Furthermore, after the untimely death of Professor C. E. Lumsden, the section on the study of tumours by tissue culture has been incorporated into the appropriate sections in the text. The reduction in the number of chapters has had the dual effect of making the new edition more compact and of relating current developments in the field of tissue culture to the

cellular biology of neural tumours. More than 50 new illustrations, including many electron micrographs, have been added. As previously, a full and updated bibliography is appended to each chapter.

This book continues to reflect the unrivalled experience of the authors in this field and will therefore remain one of the most comprehensive and principal sources of information on the pathology of tumours of the nervous system, not only for the practising neuropathologist but also for the general pathologist. The increase in price from £10 to £25 seems justified by the scholarly revision of the text and the addition of many new excellent illustrations. This new edition, like its predecessors, therefore remains 'outstanding value for money' and is highly recommended.

D. I. GRAHAM

Quality Control in Clinical Chemistry. By T. P. Whitehead. (Pp. xiv + 130; illustrated; £11.00.) New York, London, Sydney and Toronto: John Wiley. 1977.

Anyone who has heard Professor Whitehead lecture on the problems of quality control in clinical laboratories will enjoy this account of the subject. He has endeavoured to maintain the same style, avoiding the technical jargon of the statistician and the process-control engineer. This has led him to use terms like 'variance' in the dictionary sense rather than in the strict statistical sense; he does, however, make his meaning quite clear in the text. The book is written primarily for those who wish to have a simple account of techniques by which the reliability of a clinical method can be established in its development period and assessed continuously in routine service. The problems of assessing the accuracy and specificity of chemical methods are touched on. Within-batch precision and control of between-batch precision using simple control charts and cusum techniques are discussed. There is a full description of the United Kingdom National Quality Control Scheme which will enable the reader to understand how this interlaboratory scheme works and to take full advantage of it. Using this book a newcomer to these ideas should be able to establish a quality control scheme in his or her laboratory but will of course need to refer to more detailed texts for the assessment of instrumentation and particular analytical methods. This text is very suitable for persons studying for the Primary Examination of the Royal College of Pathologists