Book reviews

Cardiomyopathy and Myocardial Biopsy. Edited by M. Kaltenbach, F. Loogen, and E. G. J. Olsen. (Pp. xv + 337; illustrated; £15.66.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1978.

Although cardiomyopathy is no longer an uncommon diagnosis the definition as heart muscle disease of unknown etiology still applies. This book, which appears to be based on a symposium, aims to present an up-to-date account of recent developments in this field. Most contributions relate to the primary forms; there are also papers on hypertrophy of other causes, experimental cardiomyopathy, technical aspects and problems of myocardial biopsy techniques together with a large section on angiography and non-invasive diagnostic procedures. All but three of the 46 contributors are from Germany, and the editors are to be congratulated on the fact that this is in no way apparent in their texts. The papers are mainly short, clearly written, and well illustrated.

The place of myocardial biopsy is still being debated, and the editors conclude that although the procedure may be useful for prognosis its main value is in research, and its general application is not justified.

The book probably offers little of immediate relevance to most readers of this journal since the pathological emphasis is predictably on ultrastructure. However, those working in centres where myocardial biopsies are performed or under consideration will undoubtedly find it of interest.

ARIELA POMERANCE

Clinics in Endocrinology and Metabolism. 'Thyrototoxicosis'. Volume 7, Number 1. Edited by R. Volpé. (Pp. vii + 243; illustrated; £8.25.) Eastbourne: W. B. Saunders. 1978.

The 12 articles in this book contribute yet another excellent volume in this now well-established series of Clinics in Endocrinology and Metabolism. The sections are well written by acknowledged experts in their subject. All except one are from North American centres.

The emphasis is on new advances in thyrototoxicosis, particularly with regard to the chapters on pathogenesis, humoral

immunity, genetics, and molecular mechanisms at the tissue level.

Rare differences in approach between the two continents are inevitable, such as in the performance of a TRH test (p. 111), but overall the chapters on endocrine ophthalmopathy and the diagnosis and treatment of thyrototoxicosis due to different aetiologies are well-balanced and sound.

Finally, the editing is excellent so that unnecessary repetition has been reduced to a minimum.

Endocrinologists, general physicians, and chemical pathologists will benefit from reading this book.

S. M. SHALET

Forensic Medicine: A Study in Trauma and Environmental Hazards. Edited by C. G. Tedeschi, W. G. Eckert, and L. G. Tedeschi. In 3 volumes. (Pp. 1680; illustrated; £65.00.) Philadelphia, London, Toronto: W. B. Saunders. 1977.

The basis of this immense work is the premise that forensic medicine is concerned primarily with medical problems and their interrelated legal issues, particularly concerning trauma, and 91 contributors have produced, to their considerable credit, an encyclopaedic account of medical, forensic, and para-forensic knowledge.

Volume I on medical trauma has some unnecessarily long chapters on orofacial and musculoskeletal trauma and a superb account of explosive injuries. Volume II on physical trauma is a miscellanea of injuries due to chemical agents with facets of toxicology and serology, indifferent accounts of all forms of transport injuries, and a comprehensive review of thanatology. The third volume on environmental hazards surveys injuries occurring in industry and agriculture and those due to therapeutic and anaesthetic misadventure, and considers microbiological infections, parasitic disease, and lesions due to poisonous fish, snakes, and plants.

The hazards of multiple authorship are all too apparent, and the distinguished editorial board minus alas the founder editor, Dr Tedeschi senior, must take responsibility for this state of affairs. There is an untimely apposition of unrelated subjects, an unnecessary separation of closely related ones, a failure to incorporate

minor but important subjects into the main text, and, additionally, a deficiency of basic forensic pathology exemplified by scant reference to abortion, the asphyxial postmortem changes, and the timing of death, and no definitive contribution to toxicology. This remarkable reference work, and it can be nothing less, has a fine bibliography but is maimed in many places by poor photographic reproductions with lengthy explanatory captions. Unless our colleagues are 'big spenders' they will rely on a library to purchase this work but it contains a wealth of scientific and medical information unobtainable in a single work elsewhere.

D. A. L. BOWEN

Essays in Medical Biochemistry. Volume 3. Edited by V. Marks and C. N. Hales. (Pp. ix + 152; illustrated; £4.50.) London: The Biochemical Society and Association of Clinical Biochemists. 1977.

This volume consists of four essays on widely divergent themes.

The first, by Dr I. Chanarin, explores the complex relationships between folate and B₁₂, drawing attention to the largely unexplained differences found in man and animals on the one hand and congenital and acquired deficiencies in man on the other, leaving the reader with the challenge of problems unresolved and perhaps another co-enzyme still to be found.

Of great topical interest to both clinician and biochemist is the essay by Bagshaw and Searle on tumour markers. They bring reality and experience into a rapidly expanding field, which has suffered much in the past from the inadequately informed enthusiast.

The greater clinical emphasis of this volume compared with its predecessors is evident, and the third offering, by J. R. Holton, is on diagnostic tests in amniotic fluid. This is another rapidly developing area in which much confusion exists. The essay is both practical and informative, providing the reader with a clear picture of the potential, the advantages and disadvantages of utilisation of amniotic fluid for diagnostic purposes.

The final essay, by Marks and Turner, reviews the changing status of the gastrointestinal tract as an endocrine organ, paying particular attention to the role of gastrointestinal hormones in the main

tenance of glucose homeostasis.

The overall standard of the contributions, as might be expected, is high, providing fascinating reading for both clinician and medical scientist at an acceptable price.

P. D. GRIFFITHS

Salmonella—The Food Poisoner. A Report by a Study Group of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. (Pp. 51; illustrated; £1.00.) London: British Association for the Advancement of Science. 1978

This is a well-produced booklet, written in language the layman could understand. It describes the problems associated with salmonellas in livestock, in the food chain, and in man. The measures to be taken to reduce salmonella food poisoning are discussed. These include the reduction in the recycling of salmonellas in farm animals by good animal husbandry, the use of safe feedstuffs, and the disposal of slurry.

Attention is paid to the conditions in abattoirs and poultry processing plants. Finally, safe handling of food in the kitchen—by housewives or professional caterers—is designed to ensure that living salmonellas do not reach the plates of the consumers. Those who teach domestic science or catering would find this booklet useful.

JOAN R. DAVIES

The New Police Surgeon: a Practical Guide to Clinical Forensic Medicine. Edited by S. H. Burges. (Pp. 560; illustrated; £18.00.) London: Hutchinson Benham. 1978.

This fat discursive book is written by 22 authors, most of whom are practising police surgeons. If a pathologist wishes to take up part-time police surgeoning he will undoubtedly do a good practical job if he reads right through it. However, it is not a book to consult upon difficult matters of interpretation, even for example on the toxicology of alcohol, which is dealt with very shortly, despite the fact that alcohol is involved in the majority of cases seen by police surgeons. Most forensic pathologists will be taken aback by the advice given on how to make a report. The specimen statement on the visit to a scene of death is verbose to the extent of actually using the phrase 'I proceeded to' and gives opinions as to the cause of the injuries that should be given by the forensic pathologist. It even usurps

the duties of the judge and jury and says that the injuries to the victim indicate that the assailant 'had lost complete control of himself, resulting in a brutal savage and maniacal attack on a defenceless elderly woman'. However, although there are things like these to criticise, this book is a very sensible and practical work.

A. C. HUNT

Recent Advances in Clinical Immunology. No. 1. Edited by R. A. Thompson. (Pp. 299; illustrated; £10.00.) Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1977.

In these days of rapid advances in the application of immunology to clinical practice it is hard to keep abreast of all areas of development in this large field. The arrival of a review series in this area is consequently particularly welcome. Dr Thompson has chosen his first batch of reviews well. There are chapters on: protein calorie malnutrition; amyloidosis; ageing and immune function; the immunopathology of schistosomiasis; immune complexes; human T and B lymphocytes in blood; abnormalities in circulating phagocyte function; anti-lymphocyte globulin; replacement therapy in immunodeficiency; immunotherapy of human leukaemia; and, finally, the treatment of allergic disease. This is a lot to cover in just under 300 pages, but the editor, in restricting the length of articles, has made the authors emphasise the important.

Although there is some variation in the quality of chapters I found them all to contain useful information, and there is a generally high level of clarity. The printing and illustrations are clear. There are plenty of references (happily with titles) for those who wish to go further with any point. This volume is not just for immunologists, and I can warmly recommend it to clinical pathologists who wish to learn more of the immunological aspects of disease.

I. C. M. MACLENNAN

A Dictionary of Immunology. Second edition. Edited by W. J. Herbert and P. C. Wilkinson. (Pp. 194; illustrated; £3.50.) Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Melbourne: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1977.

As with any other specialist subject, immunology has its own jargon, which is incomprehensible to the outsider. This

is the more so as much of this jargon has been coined in the last few years. This dictionary attempts to help those who, as yet, have a poor understanding of the immunological language. In many aspects it succeeds. In general, it seems to be pitched at a fairly low level, and the definitions appear rather basic and occasionally simplistic. Consequently, the professional immunologist, who wishes to look up the odd unfamiliar word, is likely to be frustrated, and many entries could not be taken as the final authority as to the precise definition of a particular term. For example, myeloma appears to be taken as a synonym for plasmacytoma, and the definition of K cell does not even mention antibody-dependent lymphocyte-mediated cytotoxicity. In these days of rapid expansion of immunogenetics it is perhaps surprising to find no entry under haplotype or polymorphism.

On the other hand, the dictionary is particularly good in relation to the microbiological aspects of immunity.

In summary, I would recommend this book to the beginner in immunology and to the outsider. It is probably not a particularly good reference source for the experienced immunologist.

I. C. M. MACLENNAN

The Treatment of Haemophilia A and B and von Willebrand's Disease. Edited by Rosemary Biggs. (Pp. xii + 242; illustrated; £12.) Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Melbourne: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1977.

Dr Biggs and her colleagues from Oxford deal with the coagulation system, the diagnosis of the haemophilias, their treatment and its complications, home treatment, the provision of clotting factor concentrates, and, finally, some of the metaphysical problems posed by these diseases. Her book is not designed to be a practical guide for day-to-day management. For instance, the treatment of haematuria is dismissed in only six lines, but the kinetics of interaction of factor VIII with antibody is discussed in six pages. Today's core problem is joint disease, but its treatment merits only a couple of pages and only from the haematological point of view. There is little guidance about school or work, and the book must have gone to print too late to include the new data about chronic liver disease and liver biopsy.

The editor has made amends for the sparse description of clinical treatment by