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Book reviews

Connective Tissue Diseases. By Graham R. V. Hughes. (Pp. vi + 266; illustrated; £9.00) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1977.

This book is likely to be of most interest to practising physicians since its emphasis is mainly on clinical diagnosis. Some mention is made of the pathological features of the connective tissue diseases, and it is surprising that the benign localised arteritis of gallbladder and appendix, which can easily be mistaken histologically for polyarteritis nodosa, is not described in the chapters on arteritis which occupy one-fifth of the book. Current theories of aetiology are discussed, especially the role of immune complexes; the role of HLA antigens in ankylosing spondylitis (a condition not dealt with at all as such) could properly have received more attention than a brief mention in the introduction. For the clinical pathologist there is an up-to-date account of the many serological abnormalities found in the connective tissue diseases and a useful statement of the author's views of their value in diagnosis and patient management.

R. B. GOUDIE

Human Hemoglobins. By H. F. Bunn, B. G. Forget, and Helen Ranney. (Pp. x + 432; illustrated; £17.00) Eastbourne: Holt-Saunders. 1977.

This is an excellent review of the abnormal haemoglobin field. Early chapters deal with the structure and function of human haemoglobin and the way in which this is modified in various disease states. Later sections deal with the various structural haemoglobin variants and their associated clinical manifestations, the thalassaemias, and the acquired disorders of haemoglobin. The book is extremely well produced, nicely illustrated, and remarkably free from errors of fact or type; it contains an extensive and up-to-date bibliography.

Although this book deals with the abnormal haemoglobin field slightly unevenly it is by far the best general account of the subject that is currently available. The sections that deal with the modification of haemoglobin function in various disease states are particularly good. *Human Hemoglobins* is recommended most strongly to all haematologists and to others interested in the abnormal haemoglobin field. Impecunious academic haematologists will be encouraged by the news that an abridged version is shortly to be published under the title

'Hemoglobinopathies' in the monograph series 'Major Problems in Internal Medicine'.

D. J. WEATHERALL

Pathology of the Female Genital Tract. By Ancel Blaustein. (Pp. xx + 897; 1206 illustrations and 39 colour figures; DM 118, \$52.00) New York, Heidelberg, Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1977.

This book contains contributions from 28 different authors, many of whom are household names in the field of gynaecological histopathology. The 39 chapters give excellent descriptions of all anatomical regions of the female genital tract and include an up-to-date evaluation of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia. Six chapters are devoted to the anatomy and pathology of pregnancy and one to a concise assessment of disorders of female sex differentiation. Two other chapters deal with genital tract tumours in animals, both induced and spontaneously occurring.

The chapters vary in quality, the figures and illustrations falling below the average standard in both the endometrial and myometrial sections and also those on the placenta and the pathology of pregnancy. The section on ovarian neoplasms of childhood by Abell could be regarded as repetitious in view of the detailed coverage

afforded ovarian tumours elsewhere in the book. Moreover, this has to some extent introduced terminological confusion, particularly in the germ cell section.

Overall the book is beautifully produced with great attention to detail and numerous references. It is obviously a work that will be in demand by those with a special interest in gynaecological pathology and is recommended as a valuable reference book for the shelves of any medical library. J. O. W. BEILBY

Radiotracer Techniques and Applications. Volume 2. Edited by E. A. Evans and M. Muramatsu. (Pp. xiii + 544; illustrated; SFr. 160) New York and Basel: Marcel Dekker. 1977.

This book forms the second volume of a two-part work designed to provide a comprehensive basic understanding of radiotracer techniques and their applications in chemical, biomedical, and environmental sciences.

In this volume seven of the nine chapters are of direct interest to workers in laboratory and clinical medicine. The topics discussed include the use of radiotracers in biosynthetic studies, drug metabolism, cytology, enzymology, 'radioimmunoassay', clinical diagnosis, and cancer treatment.

As in the first volume, all the authors are recognised authorities in their subjects, and in most cases the literature has been reviewed up to 1977. In addition to discussing basic principles and the applications of radiotracers in their own fields the authors discuss the problems and pitfalls that may be encountered. The depth of the coverage of the subject varies from chapter to chapter, and in one or two cases the treatment is somewhat superficial.

In general, this book provides a valuable up-to-date survey of radionuclide tracer techniques. Because of its very wide coverage the book will be of more use to the reader with a general interest than to the expert, or aspirant expert, in specific fields. The book is very highly priced for a volume set in typescript rather than in letter press, and this, unfortunately, will mean that few readers will feel able to purchase a copy for their personal bookshelves. D. M. TAYLOR

Comparative Clinical Haematology. Edited by R. K. Archer and L. B. Jeffcott. (Pp.

xi + 737; illustrated; £25.00) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1977.

Comparative Clinical Haematology is a large text which presents authoritative and up-to-date accounts by 14 authors on various aspects of human and veterinary haematology. This well-presented text with excellent tables, permitting easy assimilation, succeeds to a considerable extent in its attempt to encompass such a very large field. The book is well worth possessing by those with interests in the comparative aspects of this subject. Naturally, there are considerable differences among the authors in their emphases and approaches in presenting the large body of available information on species as diverse as man, mouse, horse, and marmoset, to name merely some of those considered. A more consistent scheme of presentation in the chapters dealing with individual species (or groups of species) would have achieved more because there would have been a more decisive indication of where similarities and dissimilarities exist among species. Furthermore, such an approach would also have drawn attention more emphatically to the many gaps in our knowledge of the haematology of healthy and diseased domestic animals at any rate. For example, regulation of iron in all its aspects is discussed only in the chapter devoted to human haematology. While undoubtedly similar in principle in other species, much more detail needs to be known of iron modulation in the species, especially as iron may be involved to an important extent in infectious episodes and in immunological responses. There is also considerable unevenness among the various authors in their treatment of abnormalities of the blood and of those pathological conditions in which such changes are a major clinical feature. The approach here is very selective in what is, after all, a text on clinical haematology. E. COTCHIN

Antibiotics and Chemotherapy. Series editors: H. Schönfeld, R. W. Brockman, and F. E. Hahn. Volume 22. **Laboratory Testing for Cancer.** Edited by H. Schönfeld (Pp. vi + 189; illustrated; SFr/DM 76, \$34.00) International Conference on Laboratory Testing for Cancer, February 1977, Brussels. Basel, Munich, Paris, London, New York, Sydney: S. Karger. 1978.

Specific tests for cancer have stalked the

frontiers of credibility since the beginning of this century, and the recent renaissance of this subject stems from a similar resurgence of interest in tumour immunology. Clearly, if such tests existed they could make an enormous impact on clinical cancer management. Indeed, such tumour markers as CEA and AFP already play a role, albeit a minor one, in some clinical contexts, and much is expected from current research. This book brings together 19 papers from assorted contributors in an attempt to examine such expectations. Lacking a sense of history, the book never mentions those ghosts of former times now laid to rest: such spectra as the von Dungern test, the Freund-Kaminer test, or the Pfeiffer reaction. Their inclusion could have provided some perspective against which to examine the claims for contemporary tests.

Editorial influence is minimal. Many contributors cover similar ground, and the style is uneven. Several chapters demand an intimate knowledge of the topic, whereas, for example, Dr Rees's lucid short paper on hormone production, written for laymen, carefully defines acromegaly, Cushing's syndrome, and even cerebrospinal fluid in a style that would grace the pages of *Reader's Digest*. Schwartz has provided the best chapter: a rational analysis of progress so far. He is not seduced by preliminary data and, unlike several other contributors, eschews over-optimistic speculation.

Professor Bagshawe argues in his defence of the somewhat vulnerable MET and SCM tests that we do not have to understand a test as long as it works. Fair enough. However, proof that a test works (or does not) is a very complex game. The design of adequately controlled prospective studies becomes the most important aspect of evaluating any test, a problem which receives little attention anywhere in the book. Are the results of tests to be compared to histological diagnosis? If so, how many false-positives does histology provide?

The symposium was sponsored by a company interested in selling cancer tests, and economic considerations loom rather large. Clinical pathology is referred to as an industry: cancer patients are a market. The economic imperative, with its emphasis on marketing, allows little concern for critical scientific scrutiny, and little is shown. The few excellent papers in this uneven compilation are not enough to redeem it.

G. A. CURRIE