BOOK REVIEWS

Recent Advances in Pathology. By various authors. Edited by G. Hadfield. London: J. and A. Churchill, Ltd. 6th ed. Pp. 374; 86 illustrations. Price 30s.

This latest edition of a familiar and useful series departs from former custom in the adoption of a group of nine contributors who provide 12 chapters dealing with various aspects of morbid anatomy. Allowing for certain departures it is much the same mixture as before. G. Payling Wright brings the theories of inflammation up to date, and gives an interesting section on allergy. He might perhaps have emphasized more strongly the important European work that has brought the plasma cell into the limelight in immunity reactions, in antithesis to the earlier American work on lymphocytes in the same field. The chapter by J. Gough on diseases of the lung is particularly valuable for his authoritative account of the industrial pneumoconioses, a subject in which his own research work is so well known and appreciated.

The rather arid topic of the classification of Bright's disease gives place to a chapter, by G. M. Bull and J. H. Dible, on renal function. This includes a discussion of acute tubular necrosis (otherwise known as "lower nephron nephrosis") as well as a survey of Bull's recent work on renal function at the Post-graduate Medical School, London. The wisdom of attempting a review of recent advances in the whole field of endocrinology in the space of one chapter of 58 pages was perhaps questionable, and the result is unsatisfying. There may also be some disappointment that such actively developing lines in pathology as histochemistry, and the effects of radiations of different kinds on living tissues and biochemical systems, have received no attention. They might indeed have replaced the sections on experimental carcinogenesis, since the latter, though of manifest importance and active development, have been well presented in other recent publications. Perhaps the next edition will take some stock of these.

The other chapters on "Reticulosis and Reticulo-sarcoma" and "The Cardio-vascular System" by C. V. Harrison, and "The Liver" by the editor, embody recent advances relating structural to functional changes in a way that will be found helpful to advanced students and teachers, all of whom will find the volume as a whole very readable and stimulating.

DOROTHY S. RUSSELL.

Fibrocystic Disease of the Pancreas. Edited by M. Bodian. 1953. London: William Heinemann Medical Books, Ltd. Pp. viii + 244; illustrated. Price 63s.

This monograph is based on the extensive experience of fibrocystic disease of the pancreas and the

kindred condition of meconium ileus that Dr. Bodian and his collaborators have had at the Hospital for Sick Children, in London. It is divided into five chapters: (1) an account of the earlier literature on this disease; (2) detailed clinical and clinico-pathological studies on cases examined personally by the authors; (3) an investigation into the familial distribution of the disease; (4) an account of the morbid morphological findings in fatal cases; and (5) a discussion upon the possible pathogenesis. Each of these chapters forms a complete essay in itself. Two appendices are added: the first gives summarized case records on 116 patients studied by the author and his colleagues personally, and the second discusses the nature of the possibly related pancreatic dysplasias.

Of the clinical studies, the various types of laboratory investigation and their evaluation will be of most interest to readers of this JOURNAL. Amongst the tests described, the estimation of the tryptic activity of the duodenal contents, as assayed by Andersen and Early's gelatin digestion method, has proved to be the most informative and safest diagnostic aid. The determination of the proteolytic activity of the faeces has some value as a screening test, but it cannot be regarded as a reliable guide in diagnosis. Of the other ancillary tests, microscopical examination of the stools was found to be of considerable value, though full of pitfalls for the inexperienced.

The chapter on the familial incidence of the disease is based on a careful "follow-up study" by Dr. C. Carter of 77 index cases that had been admitted to Great Ormond Street between 1948 and the date of preparation of this book. The analysis of the pedigrees is careful and cautious, and the conclusion reached that there is a strong *prima facie* case for regarding the disease as inheritable. "The simplest genetic hypothesis which covers the findings best is that the condition is determined by a recessive gene."

The largest and most detailed chapter is that which deals with the morbid morphology of meconium ileus and fibrocystic disease of the pancreas. In it are described very fully the changes found at necropsy in infants who died at various ages; it thus provides the material needed to interpret the progressive clinical features of the established disease and to separate the secondary from the primary tissue changes. As might be expected, the greatest space is devoted to the lesions in the pancreas and the respiratory tract, but the alterations found in other diseased organs are also considered thoroughly.

In the short concluding chapter the editor reviews his material and its interpretation. He believes that there is much clinical and pathological evidence to support the view that meconium ileus should be closely linked with fibrocystic disease of the pancreas, and possibly be regarded as its earliest manifestation.