

BOOK REVIEWS

El Bazo y sus Funciones, Vol. 1. By Emilio Muñoz Fernandez and Antonio Mundo Fuertes. (Pp. 908; illustrated.) Granada: University of Granada Publications Secretariat. 1952.

The function and pathology of the spleen have always been of outstanding interest to the clinician and pathologist alike. The authors of this vast new addition to the literature on the subject have exploited this interest, and the senior author states that the intention in producing this work was to collect together the extensive bibliography on the subject, and to attempt to collate all the known facts pertaining to the spleen and its anatomy, physiology, and pathology. Each section is followed by a dissertation incorporating the authors' suggestions concerning possible future lines of investigation on the subject under discussion.

Volume 1 proceeds with detailed accounts of the embryology and anatomy of the spleen in immense detail. This is shown by chapters on the spleen and circulation in which the authors discuss the factors governing the contractility of the spleen and its chemical and humoral regulation. Every drug, common and rare, used in pharmacological research is here re-examined, together with comments of their effects on the sympathetic and parasympathetic innervation of the spleen. This section occupies 235 pages and reviews the entire subject including the reactions of the spleen to haemorrhage, blood transfusion, and even sex hormones. The authors emphasize the mesenchymatous derivation of the spleen and refer to the reticulo-endothelial component of the liver as a kind of spleen within the liver. The controversial question of the splenic circulation is discussed, and they describe the presence of interstices and foramina in the vasculature to facilitate deviation of blood into the pulp. In the examination of problems of haematopoiesis and the spleen, the authors' own words serve only to stress the complexities of the effects of splenectomy on the peripheral blood and its cellular elements.

The authors' original contributions in the study of the spleen were especially difficult to unearth from this great mountain of detail; however, among the more interesting experimental work carried out by them is the finding of the existence of some unknown substance in the splenic vein plasma which had a specially enhanced effect in raising the volume of circulating erythrocytes, and this was attributed to the presence of some hormone-like substance. They quote Selye that the spleen was probably an important organ in the production of the alarm syndrome.

The concepts of hypersplenism and hyposplenism are discussed with reference to cases in the literature, which were interpreted as illustrating the possible mechanisms involved in the production of the haematological manifestations said to characterize these states, but some of the most recent work on

the subject is not quoted. The part played by the spleen in cellular and humoral immunity in allergy is considered in great detail.

Antihormonal actions of the spleen, in relation especially to the thyroid and gonads, are accepted by the authors, and Volume 1 concludes with an interesting discussion on the part played by the spleen in malignant disease in general.

This work must be welcomed as a massive store of information on practically all aspects of splenic physiology and pathology. It suffers from the defect, however, of being excessively wordy. There is a serious lack of useful summaries at the end of each section and the reader is left to plough through diffuse discussions at the end of the chapters instead of being presented with a compact and well-digested summary of the foregoing pages. It is, however, a remarkably complete review of large aspects of splenic function and pathology, and will be a useful addition to the library as a work of reference.

E. A. DANINO.

The Disposal of the Dead. By Polson, C. J., Brittain, R. P., and Marshall, T. K. (21s.) English Universities Press, Ltd.

This book has a most arresting title—in fact the title has shocked many who, one supposed, were hardened to the vagaries of Nature. One literary practitioner summed it up in an unprintable Irish witticism. Yet the title is factually correct and none more fitting, while the substance of the book is a masterpiece of scholarship, which should prove of inestimable value to everyone whose duties necessitate such consideration. The book has already proved worthy of the best standard works of reference.

R. M. HEGGIE.

Some Conjugated Proteins—A Symposium. Edited by William H. Cole. (Pp. 73. \$1.75.) New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

The Ninth Rutgers Symposium deals with protein conjugation. Five lectures deal with haemoglobin, the cytochromes, the nucleoproteins, the lipoproteins, and the mucoproteins, each one of these being very much in the thoughts of biologists to-day. In addition there is a fascinating account of virus-infected bacteria. No pretence is made by any of the speakers of covering comprehensively the individual field, but rather of giving his own experiences and views. Professor Chargaff is always stimulating and his article on "the problem of nucleoproteins," though it adds little new, orientates present knowledge in a most stimulating way. To single out any of the articles would be invidious, but I cannot resist mentioning Professor Oncley's short but carefully annotated article on the lipoproteins and Karl Meyer's article on the mucoproteins.

N. H. MARTIN.