Laboratory Technique in Biology and Medicine. By E. V. Cowdry. Third edition. (Pp. xxxi+382. 35s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox. 1952.

In a review of the previous edition of this book it was pointed out that the misprints of the first edition had been handed on to the second generation; it is sad to note that they are present even unto the third generation. This suggests, as does other evidence, that such interest as the author and his collaborators take in the British literature is mainly in comparative anatomy. Recent British morbid anatomy receives small attention, and *Recent Advances in Clinical Pathology* is not mentioned.

To those familiar with the British literature this book should be a useful supplement, although it is, in the American phrase, as disconnected as a dictionary, and it suffers, as does a dictionary, from the necessity of saying something. Indeed it would benefit greatly from pruning, both relative and absolute. Three whole pages are given to ear smears, twice the amount given to the electron microscope; cell measurement gets more than celloidin imbedding. Five pages on Papanicolaou's method may be useful, but two pages on the microscope are unlikely to be so; this could well be deleted, as could the quasi-cultural stuff about the Egyptians using malachite to produce green pigmentation round the eyes, or saffron blossoming in the arms of the city of Florence, or the use of woad in England in days past. Eight pages are given to blood platelets and yet we find "erythrocyte counts do not fall in the scope of this book. It is sufficient to state that they are going out of fashion because of the large experimental error involved, and since it is so easy to detect variations in shape, size, and maturity of erythrocytes in smears and to measure haemoglobin content of blood by haemoglobinometers. Blum, L. L. (*Amer. J. clin. Path.*, 1945, **15**, 85), has introduced a rabid photoelectric technique for estimating the number of erythrocytes." The cross references are good, but this technique is not mentioned under rabies; as Carlyle said of Marat, "All dogs have their day; even rabid dogs."

This edition is much larger than the last, mainly because of an innovation, the addition of condensed monographs by other workers, including many on the lung by Macklin. Most of these are dated 1951, which is no doubt an index of the slowness of modern book production. It seems a pity that some of the time had not been spent on corrections. H. G. Cannon's name is always misspelt, so also with Krause and Macchiavello; "euparal," "atebrine," "isopropanol," and "xylem" are all misspelt. Amniotic comes after amyloid (for which Congo red as a histological dye is not mentioned); the entry for rubber occurs twice; on page 378 it says, "The water pressure should be so regulated that the tissue is not bumped about by the O'Leary's Brazilin method"; equally bewildering is the entry headed "Walker's Method."

In many ways this book is as irritating as the so-called school dictionary, but most pathologists will wish to have it handy. It may just happen to have the answer for problems ranging from special media to the processing of teeth, from the staining of *Leishmania* to paper chromatography, from the length of the normal ovary to the separation of cell components by differential centrifugation.

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Synovial Fluid Changes in Joint Disease. By Marian W. Ropes and Walter Bauer. (Pp. xvi+150; 15 figures. 25s.) Harvard University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege). 1953.

This book, with its numerous tables, its meticulous analysis of data, its thoughtful review of the literature and its list of 229 references, has the merits, and something of the dullness, of a first-class thesis. Everything relating to the laboratory examination of joint fluid and to the interpretation of the findings is set down in proper order. The results of 20 years' study by the authors and their associates at the Massachusetts General Hospital are here collected together, and a huge chart, folded into a pocket within the back cover, summarizes their records of about a dozen characters of joint fluid in some 30 categories of disease. Due regard is paid to the observations of other workers in this field.

Having these qualities, the book is a *sine qua non* for either the physiologist or the pathologist undertaking future research into the synovial fluid. But what of its importance to the worker in the routine clinical laboratory? There can be no question but that simple laboratory examinations of aspirated joint fluid can contribute much to the investigation and differential diagnosis of joint disease and to assessing the effects of modern therapy. Every pathologist who works in association with orthopaedic or rheumatological clinics should acquire this book for his laboratory. All questions about joint fluids that can at the present time be answered are answered here. Although to run through the book from start to finish is hardly an exhilarating exercise, there is an excellent index which extends from "Adrenocorticotrophic hormone, effect on synovial fluid findings," through "Reiter's syndrome" and "Rheumatoid arthritis," to "Vitamin D poisoning, fluid calcium and phosphate." These entries indicate the completeness of the treatise.

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