

# Reviews of Recent Books



**Essays in Metabolism.** The John Punnett Peters Number of the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, edited by Louis G. Welt. Little, Brown, Boston, pp. 382, \$6.50.

As a tribute to the late Dr. John P. Peters, a series of ten essays has been prepared by his former associates dealing with those phases of clinical biochemistry and metabolism in which he was pre-eminent for many years. The initial chapter is an appreciation of Dr. Peters by Laviertes providing a clear understanding of the remarkable abilities of the man as a scholar, teacher, and investigator. The original contributions emerge from the investigations currently conducted in the laboratories and clinics of the respective authors. On discussing body-buffer mechanisms in acid-base equilibrium, Elkinton describes the major portion of the physicochemical defense of body fluid neutrality as occurring in phases other than blood involving a series of linked ionic exchanges. The regulation of acid-base balance by renal mechanisms including the carbonic acid system and plasma CO<sub>2</sub> tension and ammonia formation is reviewed by Orloff. Sodium and potassium metabolism in experimental animals as affected by the adrenal steroids is presented by Seldin, Welt and Cort. The discussion of water distribution by Rosenbaum should stimulate further investigations into the problem of the *modus operandi* of cellular and extracellular fluid shifts. The regulation of extracellular fluid and sodium content by volume receptors located within the arterial tree which, in turn, influence renal excretory mechanisms is discussed by Epstein.

The excretion of water and solutes as affected by antidiuretic hormone and by intrinsic renal tubular responses to variations in osmotic activity of filtered fluids is presented by Welt. The impairment of water excretion in disease states characterized by the absence of diuresis in response to water load provides the basis for discussion of the renal regulatory mechanisms. The final three essays deal with specific aspects of carbohydrate metabolism including fructose utilization, glucose, electrolyte changes in cirrhosis of the liver, and serum lipid alterations.

The volume contains a wealth of new information expertly integrated with a thorough review of each of the topics discussed. Extensive bibliographies are included covering the important experimental and clinical contributions in the fields of renal physiology, electrolyte and water balance, and carbohydrate metabolism. Clinical investigators and students will find the book of inestimable value in orienting their

concepts in these rapidly advancing phases of medicine, while the practising physician may find in its pages a means of coming abreast of current progress in metabolic experimentation.

C. R. SHUMAN

**Experimental Design** by W. T. Federer, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1955, pp. 535, \$11.00.

The author of this advanced college textbook is Professor of Biological Statistics, Department of Plant Breeding, N.Y. State College of Agriculture, at Cornell University. The book originated from lecture notes to students and the objectives were to present subject matter and technics not readily available elsewhere. Examples are taken from the field of agriculture and botany, and although the basic principles apply to medical research, nevertheless, this makes for somewhat difficult reading.

As the author states, the reader needs a well-grounded familiarity with statistical concepts and technics before he can appreciate this book. Mathematical theory abounds and a good mastery of calculus and algebra is necessary. Incidentally, in the index no reference to the recently described sequential analysis was found. In short, this book is oriented toward certain non-medical biologic sciences and is quite advanced in the technical sense. It is a scholarly work on an important subject.

S. O. W.

**Liver, Biliary Tract and Pancreas, The Ciba Collection of Medical Illustrations.** Part III of Volume 3, Digestive System by F. H. Netter, Ciba Pharmaceutical Products, Inc., Summit, N. J., 1957, pp. 156, \$10.50.

This is an outstanding work. Containing 133 full-color plates for which Frank Netter is justly famous, and including a well-written descriptive text, an excellent bibliography and a most complete index, the magnificent atlas deserves to be seen by every student and graduate physician. In addition to Netter's drawings, and E. Oppenheimer's editing, there were five qualified consultants; all these contributors serve to make the book informative as well as attractive.

Special mention should be made of the section on physiology of the hepatobiliary system. The combination of art and text go a long way in explaining vividly the complexity of liver functions and the tests used to study them. Here is "medical education" in a new form, and one that can be highly recommended.

S. O. W.

**Essentials of Nutrition**, 4th edition by Henry C. Sherman and Caroline Sherman Lanford, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1957, pp. 505, \$4.90.

The fact that this book has reached its fourth edition is in itself testimony to its acceptability as a college text and reference volume.

Both in format and style the material is distinguished for its clarity, readability and accessibility. The authors presume no scientific training on the part of the reader, and there are no formal definitions. A particularly valuable feature of the book is an excellent 14-page glossary of nutritional and allied terms.

Primarily designed as a college text, the book should prove a welcome addition to the library of anyone desiring a compact little reference volume on the elements of nutrition and the practical application of this knowledge.

A. E. S.

**The Physician-Writer's Book** by Richard M. Hewitt, W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia, 1957, pp. 394, \$7.00.

**Guide to Medical Writing** by Henry A. Davidson, Ronald Press, New York, 1957, pp. 330, \$5.00.

The almost simultaneous appearance of two good books on a neglected subject makes comparison inevitable. Both books are based on extensive editorial experience. Yet the approaches of the two authors differ and each book offers something different to the reader.

Hewitt's book is based on many years of service at the Mayo Clinic and before that with the *J. A. M. A.* It is prepared for the inexperienced author-physician. It is not a style book and not directed primarily to editors. The organization is unusual and, to this reviewer at least, the frequent use of intermingled bold face, large and small roman, and italic types is not entirely appealing. The book considers first the whole article (or book), then follow comments on the paragraph, the sentence, and finally on words. It concludes with 75 pages of appendixes (or appendices according to Davidson) which contain much useful material and should perhaps have better been included in the body of the text.

Davidson's book reads more smoothly, and is in many ways more "practical." That is, it refers specifically to more of the common problems faced by author and editor. I was particularly interested with the manner in which these books handle the problem of trade and generic names of drugs. In this case Davidson gives a full and detailed discussion, whereas Hewitt's comments are brief and scattered. Davidson's book is written with a certain breezy flair and wry humor which is pleasant and unpretentious.

Hewitt's book is full of reminiscences and references to specific individuals which gives it a chatty quality. On the other hand, the large number of these references (which are also found in the index) does not lead to easy reading. The 16-line chapter 18, in this reviewer's opinion could well have been included elsewhere.

Nevertheless, Hewitt's book is full of good solid advice and every medical author will profit from it.

Davidson's style is full of unexpected touches, such as "The Zilch Law holds that the less the intellectual content of a spoken paper, the greater the number of lantern slides used. . . . The more the fat the less the meat." The informality at times is overdone, but undoubtedly the message is carried across. This book, too, will teach the reader how to improve his medical writing. The real problem is to make writers follow the valuable advice in these two interesting books.

S. O. W.

**Communication: Handling Ideas Effectively** by R. I. Johnson, M. Schalekamp, and L. A. Garrison, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, pp. 361, \$4.50.

This is a textbook for college courses in "communication" and considers writing, reading, speaking, listening and observing. A wide variety of topics are discussed, among them efficient note taking, making reports, improving pronunciation, developing editorial skills, etc. Since progress in science as in other intellectual activities depends on the effective communication of ideas, the discussions in this book should be of interest to many of our readers. Although some may find it too elementary for their needs, others will appreciate the many psychologic overtones; still others will benefit from the numerous helpful hints on understanding and being understood.

R.S.W.

Books received for review by THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION are acknowledged in this column. As far as practicable those of special interest are selected, as space permits, for a more extensive review.

*Aktuelle Diabetesfragen* by F. Bertram and J. Kuntze, Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, 1957, pp. 80, D.M. 5.70.

*Annual Review of Medicine*, edited by David A. Ryland and William Creger, Vol. 8, Annual Reviews, Inc., Palo Alto, California, 1957, pp. 530, \$7.00.

*Dietetique du Medecin Practicien*, edited by J. Lederer, Masson et Cie., Paris, 1957, pp. 520, 2,500 fr. paper bound, 3,200 fr. cardboard bound.

*Modern Problems in Pediatrics II* by A. Hottinger and F. Hauser, S. Karger, Basel, Switzerland, 1957, pp. 222, Sw. fr. 32.

*Regulation and Mode of Action of Thyroid Hormones*, edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and Elaine C. P. Millar (Ciba Foundation), Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1957, pp. 311, \$8.50.

*The Chemistry and Biology of Purines*, edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and Cecilia M. O'Connor (Ciba Foundation), Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1957, pp. 317, \$9.00.

