

# Reviews of Recent Books



**Modern Scientific Aspects of Neurology**, edited by J. N. Cumings. Edward Arnold Ltd. London, 1960. (Williams & Wilkins, American Agents), pp. 360 \$13.00.

Neurology long ago left the bedside for the laboratory. In this book ten authors discuss "scientific aspects" of neurology, i.e., biochemistry, enzymology, electron microscopy, etc. Both lipids and nucleic acids come in for special attention and it is gratifying to see how much is known—at least in the laboratory—about the brain and its appendages. Unfortunately many neurologic disorders, especially the demyelinating diseases, continue to baffle the scientist and injure the patient.

As a review of current knowledge of the basic sciences as related to neurologic medicine, this book can be recommended highly. It should be especially useful to workers in the field.

J. H. S.

**Biochemical Values in Clinical Medicine. The Results Following Pathological or Psychological Change**, by Robert D. Eastham. John Wright & Sons, Bristol, 1960 (Williams & Wilkins Co., American agents), pp. 144, \$3.75.

This little pocket-sized manual summarizes all the important laboratory procedures by giving the normal values and the clinical conditions which produce changes in them. If you want to know what disorders are associated with an increase in lactic acid dehydrogenase in the serum, or something about the "pyruvate metabolism test," you will find it in this book. A useful feature is the bibliographic reference with each test. This book should prove to be popular.

S. O. W.

**Aids to Biochemistry**, by S. P. Datta and J. H. Ottaway. Bailliere, Tindall and Cox, London (Williams & Wilkins Co., Baltimore, American Agents), 1960, pp. 266, \$3.75.

In a recent article<sup>1</sup> in the British *Lancet* an American teacher of biochemistry summarized his impressions of the position of biochemistry in the medical curriculum in London medical schools. He points out that anatomy is by far the major subject of the preclinical curriculum while biochemistry is a minor one. In response to the immediate and overt pressures of the former subject, the student is reluctant to commit valuable and limited time and brain-space to biochemistry. "A talented note-taker he does not listen to lectures or read biochemistry"; his lecture

<sup>1</sup> SCHEIN, A. H. Preclinical biochemistry. A view from London Bridge. *Lancet*, 1: 691 1960.

notes may be revised and studied just before trial examinations while his "capacity for cramming is impressive." The London faculty, according to Dr. Schein, thought that the encyclopedic American textbooks of biochemistry were too detailed, high powered and expensive and would not be read by the students.

These and other interesting comments were recalled as I examined the pocket-sized "Aids to Biochemistry," now in its fifth edition. Its brevity, scope, didactic approach and indeed its title indicate that its primary purpose is to supplement lectures and to afford a quick review of the subject. Covering a tremendous range in its small size, the material, on the whole, is up to date and carefully sifted to present basic information in preclinical biochemistry. As such there is no clinical orientation, this, presumably being left to another "aid" in "abnormal" biochemistry (chemical pathology) taught in the clinical years of school.

American medical students, with their myriad of pressures and unevenness in chemistry backgrounds and interests in basic science, are often not averse to using synoptic types of biochemistry books. Perhaps in similar proportion to the weight and volume of our recommended texts, our American synopses are larger than their English counterparts. Unfortunately, they too are unable to help give the student the stimulus toward greater interest and understanding of the key role of biochemistry in modern medicine so that he will want to expand his knowledge after he passes the necessary qualifying examinations.

MAURICE E. SHILS

**The Chemistry of Lipids in Health and Disease**, by H. K. King, PH.D., Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1960, pp. 102, \$3.75.

The author is a Senior Lecturer in Biochemistry at The University of Liverpool. The title of the monograph is somewhat misleading for it only gives a brief account of some biochemical aspects of lipids in health and in atherosclerosis. Apparently the monograph is based on his lectures and may therefore serve well for orientation of medical students.

The author chooses to treat the subject in broad outline and without detailed documentation. The monograph would be of little help to those who are looking for a detailed guide to the literature. However, it does accomplish what the author intended—it gives the reader a background against which he may read and judge the current literature.

G. C. CHIU

**Cirrhosis of the Liver**, by Martin Seler Kleckner, Jr. Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Ill., 1960, pp. 729, \$24.50.

This book is an exhaustive survey of the literature bearing on a disease of vital importance to the clinician. In this grandly illustrated text, the author has succeeded in bringing together a wealth of material on experimental and clinical cirrhosis. The section on morphology, including as it does the well known stereograms of Hans Elias, is particularly valuable. Chapters dealing with the various types of cirrhosis and the three sections on portal hypertension, ascites and hepatic insufficiency are competently handled.

Two annoying defects detract from the value of this work. The author frequently documents long series by "tossing in" references as a body at the end of the paragraph. A listing of some twenty-two causes of hepatic coma, for example, is followed at the end of the paragraph by thirty-three individual references bearing no relation to the order of the series. The reader is then left the chore of mating statement and source for statement. Secondly, the three-page index is shockingly inadequate and really nothing more than an alphabetized table of contents. It is regrettable that such faults should mar this otherwise admirable treatise.

J. E. WING

#### BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

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 extensive review.

*Transcript of the Workshop on Bone Densitometry*, by Stanley M. Garn, Harold E. Harrison and Karl E. Mason. Fels Research Institute for the Study of Human Development, Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1960, pp. 240.

*Dietary Proteins in Health and Disease*, by James B. Allison and William H. Fitzpatrick. Charles C Thomas, Springfield, 1960, pp. 86, \$4.50.

*Chemicals in Food and in Farm Product: Their Harmful Effects*, by Franklin Bicknell. Faber & Faber, London, 1960, pp. 192, 12s 6d.

*Clinical Studies in Nutrition*, by Eleanora Sense. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1960, pp. 249, \$4.00.

*Ciba Foundation Study Group No. 5. Regulation of the Inorganic Ion Content of Cells*, edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and C. M. O'Connor. Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1960, pp. 100.

*Inter-African Nutrition Conference, Third Session, Vol. II. Inter-African Conference of Nutrition, Angola, Portugal 1956*, pp. 889.

*Hypothermia and the Effects of Cold*. British Medical Bulletin, Vol. 17, No. 1. The British Council, London, January, 1961, \$3.25.

*The National Library of Medicine Index Mechanization Project*. Bulletin of the Medical Library Association, Vol. 49, No. 1. National Library of Medicine, Washington, D. C., 1961, pp. 96.

*Food Additive Control in the United Kingdom*, by C. L. Hinton. FAO, Italy, 1960 (Columbia University Press, American Agents), pp. 52.

## Nutrition News

### The Gordon Research Conference on Food and Nutrition

The Gordon Research Conference on Food and Nutrition will be held at Colby Junior College, New London, New Hampshire, on August 21-25, 1961. The topics for discussion include Food Additives, Special Problems, Fatty Acids and Tocopherol, Carbohydrate and Nutrient

Utilization, Nutrition and Disease, Future Food Problems, Obesity and Atherosclerosis. Chairmen of these sections are, respectively: Bernard L. Oser, Herbert Pollack, Robert Harris, Z. I. Kertesz, N. S. Scrimshaw, Paul B. Pearson and Theodore Van Itallie. For further information write to W. George Parker, M.D., Department of Chemistry, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R. I.