systolic murmurs at the base of the heart. The short section on electro-cardiography is not illustrated.

Throughout the work, constant reference is made to published work and each chapter is followed by a list of up to 300 references. Dr. Bauer's bipartite career has made him familiar with both European and American sources, and the German literature is generously represented.

The book demonstrates the author's preoccupation with constitutional factors in the pathogenesis of disease. Although many of the views he presents on this subject are adequately demonstrated and well documented, some of his comments upon the major role of constitutional factors in conditions such as essential hypertension, 'constitutional' diabetes and hyperthyroidism represent his own intelligent reflection rather than scientifically proven fact. The concept of the 'constitutional worth of an organ' is frequently used to explain its vulnerability as a site of complication in a general disorder. While this concept seems to have some validity, one would wish it more precisely characterized in physico-chemical terms before using it as extensively as does Dr. Bauer.

In fine it must be said that the book makes pleasant reading; it emanates the author's joy in the intellectual adventures of medicine.

H.K.

ATLAS ZUR SPURENKUNDE DER ELEKTRIZITAT

(Atlas of the Traces of Electricity)


This unique book has been prepared by an authority on this subject and by an enthusiast at that. Dr. Jellinek is professor at Vienna University, but some of his work was done at Oxford. The manifestations of the electrical current in its impact on living matter and on inanimate objects are briefly described and experiments to reproduce these effects were carried out. All this is illustrated by 199 pictures, many of them in colour.

The figures traced on the skin of men struck by lightning and in such articles as mirrors, branches of trees and conductors show a variety of diffuse or fern-like marks, but occasionally thin lines only develop. Muscle fibres undergo a curious torsion, and this occasionally affects also cell nuclei. The mechanical power of electric current may produce bursts, cuts or perforations. Sometimes a metallic oxide may stain the struck area if it has been near a metal. The patterns of necklaces or even of socks may be traced on the skins, producing tattoo-like marks.

The material of this collection is now displayed in an electro-pathological museum, cared for by the author. There is only one criticism about this book. The description of the pictures is completely divorced from the atlas part of the book and it is difficult to find the key, and a little irritating.

E.N.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF ANTIBIOTIC THERAPY


This large volume is worthy but, unfortunately, very dull. This is partly because it has been written not by one author only but by a team (of which every member happens to be very distinguished) and partly because it seems to be the editorial policy to be fair all round, to draw no comparisons between the different antibiotics, but to state as many facts as possible about all of them.

At times one feels the authors are positively leaning over backwards to avoid making any statement which might lead the reader to prefer one antibiotic to another. How can one reconcile these two paragraphs (occurring on consecutive pages): 'There seems to be no question now that on rare occasions... chloramphenicol causes serious blood dyscrasias.' 'It should be emphasized that it cannot be stated with finality that chloramphenicol... actually caused the blood dyscrasias... following (its) use.'

The result, with its enormous number of references, must be very valuable to the pharmacologist, but is not very helpful to the practising clinician (for whom it was evidently intended). Much more practical guidance, for instance, might be given about the relative merits of different preparations of penicillin, and their relative dangers. The advantages of crystalline penicillin given in high dosage two or three times a day, over all long-acting preparations, are not made clear (one is led to believe that the maintenance of a steady level of a bactericidal drug is still considered an all-important consideration). A book of this sort might well include a separate chapter on the dangers and complications of antibiotic therapy. However, those who wish to consult a complete and up-to-date summary of published work on the subject will find this book very helpful.

RADIUM THERAPY: ITS PHYSICAL ASPECTS AND EXTENSIONS WITH RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPES


This book deals with the physical aspects of the local application of radium and radioactive isotopes in the therapy of cancer and is based on the very