

discussions from a study group of 20 well-known chemists and biochemists meeting under the chairmanship of Professor H. Theorell on April 28, 1961. The reviews cover mechanisms in the liver alcohol dehydrogenase system and the mechanisms of the actions of pyridoxine and related compounds, tetrahydrofolic acid, thiamine and biotin. Much of the subject-matter is specialized physical biochemistry, and therefore the book will appeal mainly to biochemists, honours biochemistry students and others interested in the intricacies of biochemical processes. Such readers will find valuable up-to-date information in the book, showing both how theoretical predictions have been tested experimentally and summarizing the present state of speculation about mechanisms which are not yet fully understood. The book is well edited and well presented, although there are a number of small printing errors and omissions. Those not familiar with the field may wonder what 'a vitamin B₁₂ of *Escherichia coli*' is (p. 114).

Biological Stains

H. J. CONN and others. Seventh edition. Pp. x + 355, illustrated. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins. London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1961. 72s.

This book has been essential for the histologist and microscopist ever since its first edition appeared in 1925, because it is the only one which offers a critical appraisal of the terminology of stains, an account of their chemical structure and staining properties, and standard methods for testing the stains for purity and to give satisfaction to the user. In this edition the first four chapters deal with chemical and physical generalities, the next five with the synthetic dyes used as biological stains, and the last two with natural dyes and compound dyes. Two new chapters, one on the stable diazo salts used mainly for the histochemical location of hydrolytic enzymes, the other on the tetrazolium salts used for the localization of oxidizing enzyme systems, have been added in this edition. Appendices giving synonyms, colour index numbers, solubility, and methods for testing, as well as about 500 references and a very satisfactory index, complete the book.

No histological or cytological laboratory can afford to be without this book, and the biological worker owes much to the untiring efforts of the Commission on Standardization of Biological Stains, of which Dr. Conn is chairman, for its efforts to transform biological staining from a process akin to ceremonial magic into the relatively precise and logical process it has become today.

Vesico-vaginal Fistula

J. CHASSAR MOIR, C.B.E., M.D., M.A., D.M., F.R.C.S.E., F.R.C.O.G. Pp. vii + 151, illustrated. London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1961. 40s.

I enjoyed reading this book. The style is lucid and the book contains everything needed to achieve successful results by a reasonably competent gynaecological surgeon. Professor Chassar Moir has had such extensive experience of fistulae, especially perhaps in curing patients of this distressing condition, when others have failed.

It seems an impertinence to find anything to criticize: Fig. 29 on page 63 has the captions reversed, and Fig. 44 on page 92 is referred to in the text as being on page 91.

When the urinary flow is diverted, the results are

better if the ureters are transplanted into the rectum, rather than into the colon, nor is it usually necessary or, indeed, advisable to perform a colostomy. The prophylactic use of antibiotics or other bacteriological drugs is to be deprecated and confers no special advantages in urinary tract surgery.

The illustrations and diagrams are all remarkably clear. The reading of this book is essential for the novice in embarking on the operation of the closure of a vesico-vaginal fistula and the book may well become a classic of medical literature.

Handbook of Bacteriological Technique

F. J. BAKER, F.I.M.L.T., F.I.S.T., F.R.M.S. Pp. ix + 369, illustrated. London: Butterworth. 1962. 50s.

For many years the author has taught candidates for the examinations of the Institute of Medical Laboratory Technologists and the committing to paper of his teachings has resulted in this book. He has based it on the current syllabus for the final bacteriological examination of the Institute. He admits to having met with the obvious difficulties of deciding what to include and what to omit and in compressing the information required into a comparatively small book. He has been markedly successful and the young bacteriological technician will find the book most helpful for preparing for his final examination.

Unfortunately there are many inaccuracies. Some of these are technical; others are spelling or grammatical mistakes. Lactose fermenters, for instance, are generally non-pathogens and non-lactose fermenters generally pathogens and not as described on page 73. In the titration of streptolysin O and the estimation of anti-streptolysin O (pages 130 and 131) no mention is made of the need for the presence of a reducing agent. A temperature of 30° C. and not 37° C. has been universally accepted for the phage-typing of staphylococci (page 211). The type of *C. diphtheriae* which produces the 'poached egg' appearance on tellurite media, though originally described as *mitis*, is now classified as *intermedius* (page 230). *Leptospira canicola* is stated on page 288 to be the cause of infectious jaundice, but jaundice is by no means constant and at most is only slight. Examples of spelling mistakes include the misspelling of plural three times (page 5), microsporion (page 72), Wassermann (pages 109 and 113), *Spirillum minus* (page 288) and the ungrammatical plurals of neisseria (page 259) and treponema (page 286). It was Griffith and not Griffiths who typed streptococci (page 211) and is it necessary to introduce the detailed tables of the biochemical reactions of the coliform group (page 237) or the word 'parvobacteriaceae' on page 218?

The exposure of so many inaccuracies to young technicians is most unfortunate and it is to be hoped that a new edition without them will soon be available because the book fills a very definite need.

Sir John Tomes—A Pioneer of British Dentistry

ZACHARY COPE, KT. Pp. ix + 108, illustrated. London: Dawson's of Pall Mall. 1961. 25s.

'In England dentistry was lifted from the status of a trade to that of a science by Sir John Tomes (1815-95), a surgeon, who early made his mark by his studies on the histology of bone and teeth (1849-56), invented a practicable dental forceps (1839-40), wrote a well-known *System of Dental Surgery* (1859), was one of the founders of the Odontological Society (1856) and the