

Books received

Neurohypophysial Hormones. Edited by G. E. W. WOLSTENHOLME and JOAN BIRCH. Ciba Foundation Study Group No. 39. Pp. 146, illustrated. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1971. £1.75.

Congenital Deformities of the Testis and Epididymis. By C. GORDON SCORER and GRAHAM H. FARRINGTON. Pp. 203, illustrated. London: Butterworths, 1971. £4.20.

A Colour Atlas of Oro-Facial Diseases. A Wolfe Medical Atlas. By L. W. KAY and R. HASKAL. Pp. 288, illustrated. London: Wolfe Publishing Ltd, 1971. £3.25.

The Metabolic Basis of Surgical Care. By WILLIAM F. WALKER and IVAN D. A. JOHNSTON. Pp. 251, illustrated. London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd, 1971. £3.00.

Biological Tissue in Heart Valve Replacement. Edited by M. I. IONESCU, D. N. ROSS and G. H. WOOLER. Pp. 925, illustrated. London: Butterworths, 1971. £22.00.

You and Your Guts. By CLIFFORD HAWKINS. Pp. 30, illustrated. A Family Doctor Booklet. London: British Medical Association, 1971. 10p.

Tracheostomy and Artificial Ventilation in the Treatment of Respiratory Failure. Edited by STANLEY A. FELDMAN and BRIAN E. CRAWLEY. Pp. 151, illustrated. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd, 1971. £3.00.

Principles of Pathobiology. By MARIANO F. LAVIA and ROLLA B. HILL JR. Pp. 281, illustrated. London: Oxford University Press, 1971. £3.25.

Epidemiology as Medical Ecology. By W. H. LE RICHE. Pp. 460, illustrated. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1971. £6.00.

Book reviews

The Exocrine Pancreas

Edited by I. T. BECK and D. G. SINCLAIR. Proceedings of a symposium held at Queen's University, Ontario, in June 1969. Pp. 278, illustrated. London: J. & A. Churchill, 1971. £4.00.

For those in any way involved in diseases of the pancreas this is a book which is well worth reading.

A wide selection of workers in the field, consisting of scientists, clinical investigators and clinicians have contributed papers so that the work covers a wide range of topics on both the normal and abnormal pancreas.

The book is conveniently divided into sections; dealing with morphology, physiology, specific pancreatic diseases, diagnosis and clinical aspects.

Each contributor has successfully done his best to make his paper interesting, precise, and not too lengthy. Numerous references are given at the end of each paper and a short summary is also given.

Discussions included in reports on symposiums often tend to be lengthy, however, the discussions which conclude each chapter in this book are, in the main, summarized, and complete each paper by answering any queries which may arise in the preceding work.

The first third of the book deals with topics such as functional anatomy, water and electrolyte secretions and the enzymology of the pancreas.

Acute pancreatitis is to many clinicians a diagnostic headache. Similarly logical treatment of this disease is difficult, mainly because the basic pathological changes are incompletely understood. A complete section is devoted to this complaint, dealing with the proteolytic enzymes, histopathology and plasma lipid changes. Much of the experimental work is on animals, but references to the pancreatitis in man are repeatedly made and certainly give one a better understanding of the underlying histopathology.

Diagnostic aspects have a complete section to themselves. Carcinoma of various parts of the pancreas, chronic pancreatitis as well as cysts and pseudocysts are discussed. A large part of the section is devoted to the roentgenological manifestations of pancreatic disease, with an interesting paper on the role of isotopes in diagnosis completing the section. Numerous detailed X-ray plates are reproduced making this part of the book of particular interest to the radiologist.

With the genetic aspect of diseases coming more into the foreground, this book would be incomplete without mention

of this. The book concludes with discussions on cystic fibrosis and the genetic childhood pancreatic diseases. Interesting reference is made to hereditary pancreatitis, examples of which have been reported mainly from the United States, but also from France and New Zealand.

Clinical Chemistry and Automation

By RONALD ROBINSON. Pp. 187, illustrated. London: Charles Griffin, 1971. £3.20.

This is an excellent book on a very difficult subject—difficult not only because it is changing so fast but also because it still arouses instinctive distaste in many doctors. The idea of automated medicine, whether in clinical practice or in the laboratory, seems absurd; and if automated clinical practice still seems remote, the same was true of automated laboratories 20 years ago. (One can easily picture the self-service outpatients department of the future where patients will feed their symptoms into a computer, collect their own diagnosis and treatment slips, and present themselves for the automated dispensing of drugs, appliances and even psychiatric advice on tape.) Dr Robinson overcomes such sales resistance partly by writing in a style which is both simple and elegant and partly by his complete and balanced mastery of the subject. In less than 200 pages he covers work simplification, analytical errors, various ways of recording, processing and transmitting data, quality control and most types of current equipment available: in short, he provides both a theoretical introduction and a practical guide. That his book will be of interest to all clinical chemists goes without saying; but it should be of almost equal value to clinicians who increasingly depend on automated laboratories. Perhaps the least satisfactory chapter is the one entitled 'Whither Clinical Chemistry', not because the author's clarity of thought and gift of words desert him but because of the question asked. Whither indeed? In this country our potential for collecting chemical data is already vastly in excess of what we can intelligently apply to clinical problems; and, like the craze for new cars, new fridges, and new drugs, the potential is still increasing.

The book is well produced and a pleasure to handle. Some of the quotations at the heads of chapters are apt: others merely show that the greater the man, the more monumental the platitude.