

to build a picture of man's health in relation to his changing social and biological environment. Dr. Dubos ends with a summary word of caution: the creation of a self-chosen pattern of life remains a gamble; Nature will strike back. "It is," as he says, "always risky to tamper with the natural balance of forces in nature."

One might reply: "Of course it is, but that is how we learn". But Dr. Dubos' book is much more than a plea for caution in our dangerously slap-dash thinking about health. It is a learned, well-written and delightful introduction to medicine as a social science. It must be read particularly by the new generation of doctors, the human biologists as yet unencumbered by the pile of facts and loose thinking that is curative medicine to-day.

E. MAURICE BACKETT

SOME ASPECTS OF ATHEROSCLEROSIS

Hormones and Atherosclerosis

Proceedings of the Conference held in Brighton, Utah, March 11-14, 1958. Edited by Gregory Pincus. Pp. xvi+484. (New York: Academic Press, Inc.; London: Academic Press, Inc. (London), Ltd., 1959.) 13.50 dollars.

Connective Tissue, Thrombosis, and Atherosclerosis

Proceedings of a Conference held at Princeton, N.J., May 12-14, 1958. Edited by Irvine H. Page. Pp. x+316. (New York: Academic Press, Inc.; London: Academic Press, Inc. (London), Ltd., 1959.) 9.50 dollars.

THE proceedings of these Conferences are complementary to one another and contain a very worthwhile cross-section of much experimental work in the field of atherosclerosis.

"Hormones and Atherosclerosis" has a collection of 32 papers devoted to various endocrine influences in cholesterol metabolism in experimental animals and in humans. The book opens with short but excellent articles on the biosynthesis of cholesterol by Bloch and Popjak and these are followed by an authoritative account of cholesterol degradation to bile acids by Bergström. The subsequent essays are mainly devoted to the influences of various hormones on lipid metabolism in different species. In the early part of the book the emphasis is on the effects of the thyroid hormones on cholesterol biosynthesis, turnover and concentration in different tissues, by Gould, Milch, Boyd, Pick and others. A considerable part of the monograph is devoted to further experiments on the well-known effects of oestrogens on lipid metabolism, including a discussion on the prediction of oestrogenic side-effects of steroids in man by Drill and co-workers, and a series of essays on the possible usefulness of oestrogens as cholesterol depressants in man by Oliver, Katz, Robinson and Marmorston. The influences of the adrenal cortex and stress are dealt with by Friedman, Seifter, Rosenman, Adlersberg and Furman.

"Connective Tissue, Thrombosis, and Atherosclerosis" contains 16 articles covering a fairly wide spectrum of the field. Duguid presents a clear account of his concepts of atherogenesis and the role of connective tissues in arterial disease, while the chemistry of connective tissue receives a brief but stimulating treatment by Jackson.

The role of elastic tissue in atherosclerosis is briefly dealt with by Lansing, while an outline of the chemistry of the ground substance is treated by Meyer and his colleagues. Some of the metabolic activities of fibroblasts as studied by the implanted sponge method are reviewed by Noble and her associates.

Blood coagulation, fibrinolysis and the countless ramifications of this complex field are treated by Ratnoff, Astrup, Sherry, von Kaula and their associates. The symposium also contains valuable contributions on the macromolecular basis of collagen structure by Schmidt and Glimcher.

Taken collectively these two books provide a very useful addition to the modern literature on atherosclerosis. On one hand the former emphasizes the many factors which influence lipid metabolism and will be welcomed by all who work on the metabolic aspects of atherosclerosis. The latter review, with its emphasis on the thrombotic facet of atherosclerosis, will tend to restore the balance which is all too frequently absent in many monographs or colloquia on atherosclerosis.

The books are well written, clearly illustrated and very readable, and will prove useful to all interested in the general aspects of atherosclerosis.

G. S. BOYD

A PHILOSOPHY OF COSMOLOGY

Towards a Unified Cosmology

By Prof. Reginald O. Kapp. Pp. 303. (London: Hutchinson and Co. (Publishers), Ltd., 1960.) 35s. net.

COSMOLOGY is a difficult subject, not only because of the nature of its subject-matter but also because the methods of approach are of a kind with which we are quite unfamiliar in other branches of science, but even among works on cosmology the present book is a difficult one to review.

The main difficulty is the author's insistence on the "Principle of Minimum Assumption". His hypothesis, which is really a hypothesis in the philosophy of science but which he considers to be also a truly scientific hypothesis because he can confirm it in a number of cases, is that in physics the minimum assumption always constitutes the true generalization. As an example, by the minimum assumption for the number of planets in the solar system is meant the unspecific assumption that any number of planets can occur. Now, it is quite possible to call this the minimum assumption if the author so wishes, but this procedure of making the minimum assumption is diametrically opposed to the method actually employed in science, and to the method which many philosophers of science think should be employed, for the minimum assumption is the very hardest one to refute. But many of us believe that the best assumption is the one which lays itself open most readily to possible refutation. However, by means of this hypothesis of the minimum assumption, the author was led to the conclusion that a satisfactory cosmological theory requires a continual creation and annihilation of matter, and he was led to this before the Cambridge cosmologists postulated the continual creation which leads to the steady-state theory. It is puzzling that his assumption should lead to a conclusion which is not so very different from the one to which the Cambridge cosmologists were led by exactly