

The essays range through the major disciplines of pathology: histopathology, medical microbiology, haematology and chemical pathology to the newer clinical importance of immunology, cytology, automation and computers in the laboratory. Some contributors take a historic approach to developments in their subject over the past two or three decades, review its modern status, and speculate on future prospects. In this respect, this volume reviews a changing and expanding scene in the clinical laboratory. New developments in chemical pathology such as microtechniques related to paediatrics (Barbara Clayton) and the swing to automated computerized analysis in large central laboratories (T. P. Whitehead) are placed in perspective by N. F. MacLagan in his essay on "Chemical Pathology at the Crossroads". Haematology, present and future, is reviewed by E. K. Blackburn and J. V. Dacic, and G. H. Tovey tells a fascinating story of the developments in blood transfusion from wartime days to the presently available range of blood products. The role of microbiology in an altering disease pattern is further emphasized by J. A. Dudgeon, L. P. Garrod, Joan Taylor and R. E. O. Williams.

Other contributors concentrate chiefly on their research interest such as haemostasis (Rosemary Biggs), atherosclerosis (T. Crawford) and the relation of fibrin to hyalinosis (A. C. Lendrum). The latter two essays are accompanied by the best series of colour illustrations that I have seen in any book.

But all of the emphasis on clinical laboratory advance during twenty-five years is then brought down to earth by R. J. V. Pulvertaft, who writes on some of his experience with new and old diseases in Africa and the problems, apart from medical, facing those who investigate them.

This, by its very nature, is a once-and-for-all book, but for those who, like Signy, have lived and worked through this emergent period it presents a fascinating account of what we have and what we might expect in the future. J. L. Stafford, who organized its publication, is to be congratulated.

W. A. J. CRANE

EPILEPSY

Basic Mechanisms of the Epilepsies

Edited by H. H. Jasper, A. A. Ward and A. Pope. Pp. xxiv + 835. (Churchill: London, 1969.) 250s.

EPILEPSY has always been something of a mystery, but if the chief problem is still unsolved, at least this is not a subject that is standing still. Important advances in recent years have come from the electrophysiologists and electroencephalographers, in interpreting the different types of seizure pattern revealed in the clinical electroencephalograph.

The field of investigation has now been further widened, and in *Basic Mechanisms of the Epilepsies* we are presented with an encouraging range of information obtained by a variety of new techniques. The pharmacological approach has been extended by microelectrode studies of the action of anticonvulsants on individual cells. Our anatomical concepts must now include the world of ultramicrostructural detail revealed with the electron microscope, and it is significant that nearly half the chapters in this volume are dealing with neurochemical aspects of the problem.

The book started as an attempt to produce "a modern definitive statement of current knowledge regarding fundamental aspects of the epilepsies in the form of a comprehensive monograph". A meeting of experts was duly arranged at Colorado Springs, and the result is a volume of thirty chapters, to most of which has been added an additional contribution by a designated discussant. The general standard is as high as is to be expected from the

very distinguished group of contributors, most of them well known in the field of brain research. The book is well illustrated, well indexed and well produced, a credit to all who have taken part. It can be recommended as the best current collection of recent information about the various aspects of brain research which have a bearing on the problem of epilepsy.

DEREK RICHTER

PATHOLOGICAL PIGMENTATION

Pigments in Pathology

Edited by Moshe Wolman. Pp. xvii + 551. (Academic Press: New York and London, September 1969.) 275s.

In his preface the editor has this to say: "In various branches of science the investigator seems to pass through two phases which are distinct though intermingled. The first is a descriptive, cognitive phase in which both static and dynamic phenomena are observed and studied. These observations might be of natural phenomena or of experimental setups. The second phase is one of understanding the mechanisms involved and the implications and significance of the phenomena. A description of deposition of various pigments in different organs and tissues is of importance, even if this deposition is of no pathological or biological significance. The understanding of the various mechanisms underlying pathological pigmentation, of the implications of these processes as expressions or indications of the basic metabolic derangements, and of the deep meaning of these phenomena seem to be of greater interest and importance than the mere description. The following chapters attempt to do both to the best of the ability of the authoritative contributors."

With this clear and simple statement of editorial wisdom and intent, it becomes apparent that the contributors sailed under a sure captain. Unequivocally and without exception they have precisely fulfilled the task he set them.

After reading the opening chapter (Gedigk on "Pigmentation caused by Inorganic Materials"), the first comment I jotted down was "This is an example of a perfect chapter". It has an introduction for the benefit of the uninitiated, a middle and an end. It presents its subject clearly and concisely and pursues it without deviation in progressively greater depth, so that the reader can either follow it all the way or he can stop short and still receive a sound general coverage of it. The layout is clear, the prose is freely readable and there is a very ample bibliography. A chapter with these qualities from an author who is right on top of his subject leaves nothing more to be desired. And this opening chapter is not unique. At the end of the second (Heppleston on "Pigmentation and Disorders of the Lung"), I wrote simply "Another perfect chapter". And so it went on throughout all the sixteen chapters in the book. Some of these concern small new topics (for example, Saxén on "Tetracycline Pigmentation"), while others deal with huge and age-old subjects (for example, Liban on "Pigmented Naevi and Malignant Melanomas"). But no matter what the scope or status of the subjects, the excellence of the articles about them is the same.

To comment individually on each chapter would be a pleasure which space does not permit, and to single out a few would be unfair to the others. This book should be in every library used by pathologists and preferably in every pathology laboratory; certainly in all those where young pathologists are trained. And if a reviewer may be allowed one wish, it is that this book might be made compulsory reading for all those editors and contributors who contemplate taking part in the production of future multi-author works.

Professor Wolman and his team of authors are to be congratulated on producing an authoritative coverage