

BOOK REVIEWS

G. DEVAUX: *Choix de Techniques de Biochimie clinique*. Gauthier-Villars & Co., Paris, 1962. pp. 220, 30 N.F.

THE multiplicity of methods in clinical chemistry compels one to continually make a choice among the best ones. G. Devaux justifies the method he has retained on the basis of his own experience and the criteria of specificity, accuracy, reproductibility, rapidity and simplicity.

The sections in the book are based on the steps of metabolism. This classification is more rational and practical than the past division into analysis of blood, urine and faeces.

The first chapter deals successively with methods of investigation of hydro-mineral, carbohydrate, lipid, and protein metabolisms. A chapter is devoted to the estimation of some biocatalysts, and the last sections to the exploration of the most important functions—coagulation, liver, kidneys, stomach and pancreas.

All the existing methods are indexed and reviewed. No details are given if the methods are not used in routine work, or if they require expensive equipment (e.g. the spectrophotometric estimation of transaminases). The author describes the methods he has adopted and gives the reasons for his selection.

The selected methods are presented systematically: the principle of the determination, references, the sampling technique, reagents, procedure, normal values, common pathologic values and their interpretation.

Besides classical methods (blood sugar, following Baudouin-Lewin, or Hagedorn-Jensen; cholesterol, following Grigault) some new techniques are included (urea with diacetylmonoxime; cholesterol following Zak; electrophoretic methods for carbohydrates; lipo-proteins and haemoglobins; Burstein's test).

Some common determinations are also examined—porphyrins, blood ammonia, transaminases, serum iron and copper—but magnesium is not cited! Hormonology and clinical toxicology are deliberately excluded because they are specialized questions.

The absence of some essential determinations (cryoscopy, resistivity and serum magnesium for example) and the lack of details for recent methods (the chromatography of urinary sugars, glucose-monooxidase method) do not permit one to consider this book as a complete reference handbook of clinical chemistry. But its good and modern arrangement makes it a book of interest and value to those having to select a method for routine clinical chemistry.

C. HEUSGHEM

Advances in Thyroid Research. Fourth International Goitre Conference, General Editor ROSALIND PITT-RIVERS. Pergamon Press, 1961. pp. 537, £6 6s.

CE VOLUME contient: (1) le discours introductif de Sir Charles HARRINGTON, Président du Congrès; (2) le discours de E. RAMSDALL, Président de l'American Goitre Association; (3) la "Dunhill Memorial Lecture", par Sir Geoffrey KEYNES; et (4) une centaine de communications scientifiques.

Un peu plus de la moitié de ces communications est du domaine clinique. La plupart des résultats présentés concernent le goître endémique et se rapportent à des sujets très variés: distribution géographique des goîtres, méthodes de diagnostic, rôle des goïtrogènes et autres facteurs dans la genèse de la maladie, aspects génétiques, traitements.

Une quarantaine de travaux sont expérimentaux. Tous présentent un réel intérêt, mais quelques uns retiendront plus spécialement l'attention des pharmacologues et des biochimistes.