

## BOOK REVIEW

*Notions fondamentales de biochimie* par CLÉMENT DUVAL (GAUTHIER-VILLARS, Paris, 1946, 650 francs).

This textbook, intended for those beginning the study of medicine, is divided into two sections. The first two-thirds is a simple account of modern atomic physics (including artificial radio-activity), elementary physical chemistry, and organic chemistry; the remainder gives some account of the constitution of living matter. Necessarily, to get all this into one volume has involved much condensation and selection of material, and the second part of the book is very sketchy by Anglo-American standards. Some allowance may be made for the fact that the book was written in 1943, during the occupation of France, but this can hardly excuse all the errors of fact, and the sometimes strange choice of material. In the chapter on proteins, for example, diketopiperazines are said to be constantly found in the acid or enzymatic hydrolysis of proteins, glycine is described as absent from albumins as a class, and myosin is noted as yielding tryptophane on hydrolysis, scarcely a very significant or useful fact in itself, without at least some reference to its other amino-acid components. These flaws can be paralleled in most of the other chapters. It is a pity at a time when biochemistry is becoming of immense importance for the understanding and even practice of medicine to find that medical students are so often offered trivial and out of date information by modern textbooks.

J. L. CRAMMER (Cambridge)