

BOEKBESPREKINGS : BOOK REVIEWS

BIOCHEMISTRY OF INTERNAL DISEASES

Biochemical Findings in the Differential Diagnosis of Internal Diseases. Ed. by R. Schoen and H. Südhof. Pp. xvi + 428. R11.00. Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Co. 1963.

The biochemistry of internal diseases has become so important for ordinary everyday diagnosis and management of patients that the physician can ill afford not to have a basic understanding of the various biochemical derangements and the interpretation of the findings in relation to differential diagnosis.

This book attempts to supply just this need. Coming from German authors, it has been translated very well and is easily read. Nevertheless one does find here and there a lack of appreciation of English phraseology such as the description of certain biochemical findings in 'man' in contrast to the findings in women.

The field is well reviewed and covers chapters on carbohydrate metabolism, fat and lipid metabolism and serum proteins. There are sections on water and electrolyte metabolism, hormones, enzymes, blood clotting, immunology, and serology, and additional chapters on calcium and phosphorus metabolism, metabolism of blood and bile pigments, metabolism of iron and other heavy metals and a separate chapter on thyroid gland diagnosis and renal diagnosis as well as liver diagnosis.

Just sufficient clinical information is given to make an understanding of the biochemical findings easier. Techniques are also explained in principle rather than in detail. It is, however, evident that in some respects adequate knowledge of work outside the European continent has not been well appreciated. This probably explains the reason why nothing is said about the tolbutamide-sensitivity test for an insulinoma or why the insulin-resistance test for excess growth hormone production has not been mentioned. Nothing is said about the value of alkaline phosphatase activity in granulocytes as an aid in the differential diagnosis of polycythaemia rubra vera from secondary polycythaemia, and the concept of glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase in the development of certain haemolytic conditions is not touched on.

In the discussion on immunology, too, one finds no reference to Burnet and to the auto-immune concept of Hashimoto's disease.

These are, however, minor deficiencies and the book as a whole is well worth having and will repay careful reading. There are excellent tables which supply, in summary form, all the differential features of the various conditions discussed and also give normal values and indicate which tests are most likely to be of value.

A.J.B.

DISEASES OF THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Diseases of the Digestive System. By S. C. Truelove, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P. and P. C. Reynell, M.A., D.M., F.R.C.P. Pp viii + 696. Illustrated. R8.40. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1963.

It is a pleasure to read a book on the digestive system which is comprehensive, and yet not of an unreasonable length, by a worker with the experience of Dr. S. C. Truelove. The digestive system lends itself to loose thought, but the authors have been faithful to the principles of the scientific method as applied to clinical medicine. The numerous X-ray reproductions have been wisely selected and are very well reproduced. Its simplicity, balance and complete coverage make it a book of value to medical students, postgraduate students and to any clinical practitioner including general practitioners, surgeons, physicians, and psychiatrists who deal in their practices with disorders of the digestive system.

G.A.E.

RENAL TRANSPLANTATION

Renal Transplantation. By R. Y. Calne, M.S., F.R.C.S. Pp. vii + 190. Illustrated. R5.00. London: Edward Arnold Ltd. 1963.

The replacement of an irreparably diseased organ by a new one has exercised the minds of medical researchers for many years. Although a certain number of remarkable successes in renal transplantation have been achieved, the general picture is far from satisfactory, and numerous problems still remain to be solved.

This highly authoritative, well-documented monograph discusses the biology of rejection of homologous tissue and presents the overall picture of experimental and clinical experience to date in a clear and concise manner. It is highly recommended to all who are engaged in the field of organ transplantation.

W.M.R.