

Throat surgeons will not find much new in this encyclopaedic work, but reference to it will assist them in choosing appropriate radiotherapy in individual cases. Radiologists should find the book of interest and a matter for admiration.

W. M. MOLLISON.

THERAPEUTICS

A Course in Practical Therapeutics. By Martin Emil Rehfuess, M.D., F.A.C.P., LL.D.(Hon.), and Alison Howe Price, A.B., M.D. Third edition. (Pp. 972+xvii; illustrated. £6.) London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox Ltd. 1956.

The numerous textbooks on therapeutics which are published in America—mostly very large and expensive and nearly all of which run into several editions—are a testimony to the widespread interest in the subject which exists on that continent. They are nearly all composite works, written by groups of men whose investigations and teaching experience in certain aspects of internal medicine qualify them to make authoritative statements. From a British point of view their only drawbacks—apart from their price—are the unfamiliar nature of some of the proprietary drugs mentioned and the dreadful crimes which are often committed in them on our common heritage, the English language—though it must be confessed that such crimes are by no means the prerogative of Americans. The great majority of these textbooks are very good, and this one—the product of the staff of the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia—is among the best of them. It is the third edition since 1948, superbly bound, beautifully printed on excellent paper, and splendidly illustrated; it weighs over 6 lb. and sells in this country at £1 a pound. The extraordinarily rapid evolution of therapeutics which quickly renders large parts of such books out of date makes it doubtful whether it is wise to produce a volume of such evanescent value on such a sumptuous scale. This is the only serious criticism of the work, though it is inevitable that occasionally there should be a therapeutic recommendation in it with which the reviewer disagrees. The book, which is remarkably comprehensive, is produced in four sections: Section 1 deals with general therapeutic principles—prescription writing, dietetics, nursing problems, and the contents of the physician's bag; Section 2 is concerned with symptomatic treatment—backache, constipation, cyanosis, fever, etc.; Section 3—much the largest—with the treatment of specific disorders; and Section 4 with special treatment—antibiotics, psychotherapy, isotopes, rehabilitation, and so forth. The standard is everywhere worthy of the distinguished authors.

D. M. DUNLOP.

BLOOD TRANSFUSION

Physiologie und Klinik der Bluttransfusion. By Horst Möller. (Pp. 222+x; illustrated. D.M. 16.) Jena: Veb Gustav Fischer Verlag. 1956.

This book on the physiological and clinical aspects of blood transfusion contains a good deal of useful information, but it also contains rather a lot that is useless and even misleading. This arises from the fact that all opinions which can be supported by a reference to the literature are treated with equal respect. For example, four methods of collecting placental blood are described, two "open" and two "closed," but the author does not say which he prefers. The reader might conclude that allowing the cord to drip into a funnel is just as satisfactory as collecting the blood by puncture of the umbilical vein with a needle attached to a standard "taking" set. The book contains many statements which are out of harmony with modern views. Thus it is not nowadays believed that transfusion stimulates the marrow (p. 63), or that diathermy of the kidney is beneficial in anuria (p. 144), or that a compound with a molecular weight of about 13,000 would stay in the circulation for one or two days (p. 135), or that the transfusion of fresh blood is indicated in the treatment of cardiac infarction (p. 191), or that fresh blood is of any special value in the treatment of leucopenia (p. 96). Although quite a lot is said about the preservation of red cells the book contains no quantitative data about their post-transfusion survival. The information

about blood groups is behind the times. Thus the Kell, Lewis, Lutheran, Duffy, and Kidd groups are dismissed in a few lines as being rare blood factors to be dealt with only in special laboratories. It would be wrong to give the impression that this book is of no value at all; there are many interesting sections, such as those on the history of transfusion and on transfusion techniques. The weakness of the book lies in the fact that the author has too often been unable to call upon his own experience and has been uncritical in selecting the opinions of others.

P. L. MOLLISON.

PULMONARY EMPHYSEMA

Pulmonary Emphysema. Edited by Alvan L. Barach, M.D., and Hylan A. Bickerman, M.D. (Pp. 545+x; illustrated. 80s.) London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1956.

Pulmonary emphysema is one of the common diseases which constantly challenge modern therapeutics. Much investigation has been carried out during the last decade into the aetiology, treatment, and laboratory tests of disturbed respiratory function in this disease. A book embracing the up-to-date views on these diverse aspects and presenting them lucidly to the general reader would indeed be welcome. *Pulmonary Emphysema*, a symposium written by 18 American authors and edited by A. L. Barach and H. A. Bickerman, is an attempt to supply this need. The book is written by experts; it contains a galaxy of facts; it is admirably produced and the bibliography is excellent. The current views on treatment are described in detail and treatment is logically related to the mechanical defects and impaired ventilation which occur in emphysema. The use and dangers of oxygen, the technique of physiotherapy, and the pharmacological approach to treatment are fully and dogmatically outlined. Yet, as a book, it fails because it appears to have been written without considering for whom it has been written. The physician, for example, approaching with relish the chapter on the use of corticotrophin and corticosteroids in emphysema, will find it irksome to read 25 pages devoted almost entirely to the well-established facts about these preparations in general medicine. The chest physician will find much of the material commonplace, whereas the chapter on respiratory function tests will give him a confused account of technique and terminology without supplying a guide to the practical application of the tests described. The general reader will find it cumbersome as a reference book. It is a pity that such excellent material drawn from such wide experience could not have been more clearly presented. It is hoped that future editions of the work will be written more concisely and with more regard and sympathy for the intended reader.

T. PARKINSON.

PHASE-CONTRAST MICROSCOPY OF THE BLOOD

Das Phasenkontrastverfahren in der Haematologie. By H. G. Hansen and Alexander Rominger. (Pp. 126; illustrated. D.M. 16.) Hamburg: Materia Medica Nordmark. 1956.

This book on phase-contrast microscopy in haematology consists of several hundred photographs of cells, each shortly described and linked by a more discursive text. The authors seem to be especially interested to assign cells seen by phase-contrast to categories devised for stained cells. The short sections on physical and cytological fundamentals are quite inadequate, and the book depends for its interest mainly on the pictures. These are of very unequal value. Most of them show less detail than can be attained in comparable material, and, though much of this is due to imperfect reproduction, some appear to be due to technical imperfection. There are, however, some excellent pictures of malaria, toxoplasma, trypanosomes, and leishmania, of unusual leukaemias, and capillaries and sinusoids of bone marrow. One can only learn phase-contrast cytology by using a phase-contrast microscope, and this book will be of very little help to beginners or to anyone else.

GEORGE DISCOMBE.