

which give, as well as a guide to the literature, carefully-written reviews of every possible aspect of the smoking habit, not only of its basic pharmacopathological effects but also its psychology, its prevalence, and the arguments for and against a causal role in related disorders of the human structure and function. They even review the economic consequences of the habit and extend their interest as far as the uses of nicotine in veterinary practice and as an insecticide. One trouble about these books is that one really needs to have the whole set to cover earlier work on the innumerable topics they discuss, for many of the references in the later volumes are to articles in earlier supplements. For instance, the index of the current volume gives "Elephant, fondness of tobacco, 282"; but on p 282 one finds only "Elephant (no new data)." Just above this, however, under "swine" there is a note that elephants which break into tobacco fields become "drunken and sleepy," but the reference is to a previous volume.

The latest supplement covers the period 1968-74, listing additional references within each section extending up to 1975. These books, and especially the most recent supplement are an essential help to anyone who wants to find out about or is studying what is probably the most prevalent and harmful addiction to which the human race is subject.

C M FLETCHER

### *A Colour Atlas of Physical Signs in General Medicine*

M Zatouff. (Pp 464; £18.) Wolfe Publishing. 1976.

There must surely be ample justification for books which capture in pictures those clinical features which strike us visually at the bedside. This book, one of a series from the same publisher, is the work of an experienced and travelled physician. The clinical photographs are accompanied by a text which sets out the deductive processes leading to a diagnosis, along with a description of associated features which may be present.

Some of the photographs are superb, most are adequate, while only a few are poor examples or lack adequate definition. A creditable attempt has been made to capture some moving events in series of still shots. There is a tropical emphasis—perhaps because tropical disease is more photogenic. However, in these days of international travel no doctor knows which exotic disease he will see next.

There are some criticisms. With the expense of photographic reproduction being what it is there should not have been duplication of plates, some of which appear twice, with others showing the same point twice or more. An editorial decision should have been taken to omit those illustrations which demonstrate how to elicit parts of the physical examination. Space could have been created to remedy some important omissions such as temporal arteritis, surely one of those conditions of which one can say, "once seen never forgotten." Other criticisms refer to the effects which books like this have, or may have, on the lazier student. One can imagine this volume being used at the last minute by ill-prepared examination candidates. A quick walk round an art gallery does not teach one art interpretation. Pictures tend to pick out late manifestations of disease; it is important not to lose sight of the principle

that early disease cannot usually be spotted from the end of the bed.

Despite these reservations this book can be recommended as an accompaniment to systematic reading for students taking their final and membership exams. It captures most of those moments which could not be as well described in words.

ROBERT A WOOD

### *Medical Ophthalmology*

Ed F Clifford Rose. (Pp 574; £15.) Chapman and Hall. 1976.

Most of the diseases of the eye which are amenable to surgery are now treated by well-established techniques, with, in general, a high degree of success, and developments in ophthalmology are becoming more medical and neurological. Only a small proportion of blindness occurs in the years between infancy with its congenital and neonatal disorders and senility, and in middle life the commonest cause of visual impairment is a mainly medical problem—diabetes.

Several useful books on medical ophthalmology have been published in Britain in the past 50 years, but they rapidly become out of date. This new book is a composite compiled from the work of many authors, each of whom is either an expert in his field or has found time to search thoroughly into what others have contributed. The editor has chosen a fairly wide list of authors, though there are some surprising omissions, and has selected their chapters with care, inevitably having to omit some subjects of interest to ophthalmologists and neurologists. There are sections on diagnostic aspects, neuro-ophthalmology, inflammatory and vascular disorders, and systemic diseases such as diabetes and Graves's disease, blood abnormalities, drug reactions, and other subjects. The illustrations, all monochrome, contain some excellent fundus angiograms.

A work of this size, some 550 pages, clearly has to be a textbook rather than a reference work, which might be out of date by the time it is published. The tables of references, however, go far to encourage deeper studies, and without doubt the new book will prove valuable to those who are working for higher qualifications in ophthalmology.

HAROLD RIDLEY

### *Microtechniques for the Clinical Laboratory*

Mario Werner. (Pp 442; £19.50.) John Wiley. 1976.

Too often authorities do not write well on their own subject. Being close to it they use jargon that confuses the general reader. But this is not so here. Thirty authors have contributed, each an authority in his own field, and the standard of writing is high. Inevitably there is some variation from chapter to chapter, but nearly all the 26 chapters are readable and all are informative.

One of the most refreshing features of this book is that it does not descend to the level of becoming a kind of clinical chemistry cookery book. The subject matter falls into three main groups: discussion of particular types of instruments; descriptions and evaluations of

techniques; and considerations of the merits, the economics, and the logistics of using microtechniques in the clinical chemistry laboratory. It contains much valuable information on the performance of analytical systems and instruments which would be hard to find elsewhere. The range of subjects covered is very wide indeed. Perhaps not all the material is of immediate interest to clinical chemists, though I suspect that within the next few years it will be.

Many of us are reluctant to introduce micromethods into our laboratories, believing that they are necessarily less precise than standard procedures. Dr Mario Werner, who wrote the preface to this book, believes this to be untrue. He suggests that micromethods are "frequently superior and almost invariably equal to accepted methods by any operational criterion." This belief is clearly shared by all the contributors.

This volume is compendious. It may be regarded as a reference book on all aspects of microanalysis. It deserves a place on the bookshelves of all clinical chemistry laboratories.

R ROBINSON

### *Methodology in Medical Genetics*

Alan E H Emery. (Pp 157; £6.50.) Churchill Livingstone. 1976.

Here Professor Emery describes in simple mathematical terms the analytical methods that are most often used in human genetics. His book includes chapters on the estimation of gene frequencies, the genetic structure of populations, segregation analysis, multifactorial inheritance, genetic linkage, twin studies, recurrence risks for genetic counselling, associations of disease with genetic markers, parental age and birth order, and changes in disease frequency. This is no easy task, and Professor Emery has succeeded in it with considerable artistry and a lively style, referring the reader to original sources for the full explanation and derivation of each procedure. The selected studies quoted are chosen to illustrate the method rather than to provide the best available data.

One such illustration, a study of endocardial fibroelastosis, might perhaps be replaced in a later edition, or retained with a caveat, since the authors of the report did not correctly define the proband in a sibship and so arrived at too high an estimate of the recurrence risk. In some chapters Professor Emery has first described the methods suggested by mathematically minded geneticists analysing other people's data rather than the simpler methods which have proved most useful in the field. The proband method is the best way of estimating segregation ratios. A comparison with the Registrar General's data for the equivalent years and areas is the best way of looking for effects due to maternal age and birth order. However, proceeding from the mathematically elegant to the practically useful may be the best method of teaching the reader the principles.

This book will be particularly useful to teachers of human genetics. It will also be valuable to readers planning a specific piece of medical genetic research. If the appropriate method is not in the book, the reader will usually find a lead where to look for help.

C O CARTER