

BOOK REVIEWS

THE LIPIDS—THEIR CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY (Volume II). By Harry J. Deuel, Jr., M.D., Dean, Graduate School, and Professor of Biochemistry, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California. \$25.00, pp. 919, Interscience Publishers, Inc., New York, 1955.

The chemistry of lipids has been covered in Volume I of this series and the present volume deals with certain aspects of lipid biochemistry. This comprehensive treatise was originally intended to be published in two volumes, but the wealth of biochemical material necessitated expansion to three volumes. Volume II takes up the digestion, absorption, transport, and storage of lipids, and Volume III will include material on their biosynthesis, metabolism, oxidation, and nutritional value. The unfortunate recent death of the author will not interfere with publication of Volume III. According to advice from the publisher, satisfactory arrangements have been made for its completion, and it is scheduled for publication next year.

In these days of well-nigh explosive advances in biochemistry, few are the hardy individuals who have the ability and fortitude to attempt a work of this monumental scope. It is a tribute to the author's standing in the field and to his perseverance that he has succeeded in producing a first-rate monograph which, I believe, will remain a landmark in the lipid field for many years. It is refreshing to find a work of this magnitude, written by one author in a clear, lucid, and informative fashion, instead of the usual collection of separate reviews, each written by a different author. Of especial value to the reader are the numerous descriptions of experimental procedures, and the documentation of data in a large number of tables. The collection and tabulation of data alone must have represented a tremendous task. The inclusion of older, as well as newer material, provides an historical perspective which adds greatly to the value of the subjects covered.

The first section deals with the digestion and absorption of lipids. The first chapter describes the enzymes concerned with the digestion of lipids. This subject is rather broadly interpreted; of the sixty-seven pages devoted to it, thirty-eight pages are taken up with choline esterases and choline acetylase. The role of bile is covered in two chapters. Particularly valuable is the extensive treatment of choleic acid complexes. One of the two chapters on lipid absorption contains a fascinating

and informative description of the experimental physiological and surgical procedures used in measurement of lipid absorption.

Of great value to nutritionists is the exhaustive treatment of the digestibility of fats and other lipids. Perhaps of greatest immediate interest to clinicians is the extensive treatment of the subject of blood lipids, covered in eight chapters of 170 pages. Topics of particular current importance are the lipoproteins, and the factors influencing their amounts and types and their relation to atherosclerosis. The interesting and significant effects of the endocrines on blood lipid levels are thoroughly discussed.

The remaining two sections are devoted to the lipid composition of animals as a whole and to specific tissues and their secretions. Especially noteworthy is an extensive discussion of conditions related to fatty liver, to which seventy pages are given, the factors involved and the mechanisms concerned in milk-fat formation, the distribution of lipids in man as a function of endocrine imbalance, and an excellent, though brief discussion of the physiological significance and composition of adipose tissue. Other portions of particular interest to the clinician are the sections devoted to the various lipid storage diseases and to the various obesities.

The printing and binding are of excellent quality and the price of \$25.00 is not high by present day standards, considering the size and scope of the work.

MEDICAL PROGRESS, 1956. Edited by Morris Fishbein, M.D. \$5.50, pp. 389, Blakiston Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, March 1956.

The 1956 edition of *Medical Progress*, a review of medical advances in 1955, is published by the Blakiston Division of McGraw-Hill Book Company. The editor, Dr. Morris Fishbein, of recognized experience, has selected in this fourth volume of a series of annual publications, an outstandingly competent staff of twenty-nine contributors among whom are included, to name but a few, Elliott P. Joslin, William A. Brams, R. B. H. Gradwohl, Edward S. Judd, Perrin H. Long and Lewis M. Hurxthal. There are twenty-one chapters, mainly on the branches of Internal Medicine but also (and what may make it even more valuable for any physician) including chapters on Gynecology, Surgery, Laboratory Procedures, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Psychiatry, Orthopedic Surgery and Ear, Nose and Throat conditions.

The contributors have written in an interesting style and the impression is not of a mere summary of outstanding articles but of thought and integration so that the reader is privileged to have the benefit of the evalu-

ation and interpretation given by authorities.

In all but 3 of the 21 chapters there is an adequate and often very extensive bibliography to enable the reader to pursue further any special interest. The index is excellent. The format facilitates reading and study.

If one may venture a criticism it is this: Why, in this age when a physician's memory is burdened with chemical and proprietary names, must he also learn the term "ataraxics" (not to be found in some general or even medical dictionaries) when the simpler term "tranquilizers" will do as well or better?

TEXTBOOK OF ENDOCRINOLOGY. Edited by Robert H. Williams, M.D., Executive Officer and Professor of Medicine, University of Washington Medical School, Seattle, Washington. \$13.00, pp. 776, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, August 1955, 2nd ed.

The field of clinical endocrinology has become so broad in scope that the preparation of an authoritative, well-organized textbook on this subject is a staggering task. The authors of this volume, under the leadership of Robert H. Williams, have succeeded in preparing such a textbook for the student and practicing physicians. The volume illustrates the advantages of multiple authorship, as well as some of the disadvantages.

No single author can write on all aspects of endocrinology with requisite authority. The principal advantage of multiple authorship of this textbook lies in the fact that each writer is an authority on his subject. Thus, the editor, Robert H. Williams, writes on "General Principles of the Physiology of the Endocrines," the "Pituitary," the "Thyroid," and "Diagnosis and Treatment of Endocrinopathies: Hormone Preparations." The editor, together with several of the other authors, writes on "Laboratory Diagnostic and Assay Procedures." Peter H. Forsham and George W. Thorn prepared the chapters on the "Adrenals" and the "Pancreas and Diabetes Mellitus"; John Eager Howard and William Wallace Scott on the "Testes"; George Van S. Smith on the "Ovaries"; Edward C. Reifenstein, Jr., on the "Parathyroids"; Lawson Wilkins on the "Influence of Endocrine Glands Upon Growth and Development"; Harry B. Friedgood on "Neuroendocrinology," and William H. Daughaday on "Obesity." The writings of these authors make up a textbook of endocrinology of high quality.

The material on diabetes mellitus by Forsham and Thorn is effectively presented. The clinical material is preceded by a well-prepared, concise section on fundamental endocrine and metabolic information in relation

to diabetes. The clinical material is well organized and presented along lines which are accepted by most of the authorities on diabetes in this country. A section on hyperinsulinism, which was omitted from the first edition, is included in this chapter and deals with the subject in a brief but adequate manner.

One of the principal disadvantages of multiple authorship is the lack of uniformity in style of writing, length of presentation and critical faculty exhibited by the various contributors. For example, the material by the editor himself is written in a thoughtful manner with due consideration to the opinions of others on controversial subjects. Likewise, the chapter on the testes by Howard and Scott is thoughtful and critical in its tone and recognizes the limitations of existing knowledge. (It should be pointed out that this chapter is not as up-to-date as it might be, only 7 of the 82 references being dated later than 1950). By contrast, the chapter on the adrenals by Forsham and Thorn shows a tendency to present more material as established fact than is really known to be fact. Some will regard this as good pedagogy, even though the positive tone is achieved at the expense of complete accuracy. To some extent the dilemma involved in trying to be concise, positive and simple for purposes of good teaching and, at the same time, reasonably accurate is inescapable, but on some points these authors go too far in sacrificing accuracy for simplicity and positivity.

The chapter on the parathyroid glands by Reifenstein is excellent. Perhaps it is disproportionately thorough and lengthy in relation to the other material in the book and to the frequency of diseases of the parathyroid glands. The material by Friedgood on neuroendocrinology is somewhat out of harmony with the rest of the volume in that it deals, in a verbose manner, too much with fantasy and too little with fact. A critical appraisal of what is actually known of neuroendocrine relationships would provide a useful chapter in this volume but the present chapter does not fulfill the requirements.

The chapter by the editor and others on laboratory diagnosis and assay procedures will be of considerable interest to students and practicing physicians who are seriously interested in endocrinology. The final chapter by the editor outlines in a sound manner certain fundamentals in the diagnosis and treatment of endocrinopathies and the use of available hormone preparations.

On the whole, and in spite of the inconsistencies which inevitably accompany multiple authorship, this is an excellent textbook of endocrinology which can be recommended to students and practicing physicians alike.