

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. Reifstein, 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 Reifstein 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.