Book reviews

Myelomatosis—Fundamentals and Clinical Features. By I. SNAPPER and A. KAHN. 1971. Pp. XVI + 380, 90 figs, 790 refs. Karger, Basel. (£9·30)

Snapper's famous book has been completely rewritten and the two present authors are to be congratulated on maintaining a high standard of authority and readability.

Chapters 13—Familial occurrence and chromosome abnormalities, 15—Generalized bone disease, 19—Cholesterol metabolism, and 28—Treatment are truly excellent reviews not readily available elsewhere.

Despite 18 pp. on the detection of Bence Jones protein, I cannot accept any form of heat-testing as adequate in 1971. The simplest screening test (Bradshaw, 1906) of layering urine over conc. HCl is not considered. The statement that urine for electrophoresis 'must first be dialyzed for 24 to 48 hours and then concentrated' is untrue, as collodion thimble ultrafiltration can so prepare urine within 1 hour. The authors fail to emphasize that the most valuable distinction between 'false-positive' excess normal* light chains (from tubular damage) and Bence Jones† protein is electrophoresis (diffuse polyclonal* mobilities v. narrow monoclonal†) and not immunoelectrophoresis.

There are a few other didactic statements which are untrue:

p. 229 in hyperviscosity due to 7s IgG—'the immunoglobulin is an IgG-3';

p. 236 in cryoglobulinaemia—'by an excess of the IgG-3 subclass' (both syndromes occur with other IgG subclasses);

p. 288 referring to alpha-chain disease—'the complete heavy chain of —IgA—' (most of the Fd is missing).

The repeated inference that myeloma kidney is the commonest renal lesion ignores their own data (p. 264, pyelonephritis in 37, myeloma kidney in 24 of 91 *post mortem* examinations). Their theories on amyloidosis, while most interesting, are superseded by current evidence of the light-chain V-fragment being involved in amyloid.

Chapter 28, on treatment, opens with a sound assessment of various trials. This evidence of hundreds of successfully treated patients is then disproportionately overruled with an anecdote of one of their own patients.

They also sarcastically infer (p. 307, 1.7) that the M.R.C. trial centres 'refuse to treat . . . uncooperative patients, etc.' This of course is a misrepresentation: such patients would yield unreliable data and were therefore not admitted to the trial but nevertheless received treatment as non-trial subjects. Their appraisal of prednisone and fluoride is splendid but they omit the important general treatments of maintaining mobilization and a high fluid throughput.

Notwithstanding these niggling errors, this book remains the best single monograph on myelomatosis and I learned a great deal from it.

J. R. HOBBS

The Chemical Pathology of Rheumatoid Arthritis. By H. F. WEST. 1970. A monograph in the series 'American Lectures in Living Chemistry', edited by I. Newton Kugelmass. Pp. 85. Thomas, Springfield, Ill. (\$7·00).

Rheumatoid arthritis does not appear to be a particularly rewarding disease from the point of view of the routine chemical pathologist. His contribution to both diagnosis and the monitoring of therapy is negligible. The title of Dr. West's book is thus at first sight surprising. But it soon becomes apparent that he is not concerned with chemical pathology in its role as a routine diagnostic aid, but in its more fundamental sense. His book is in fact a prolonged speculation on the possible nature of the fundamental biochemical lesion in rheumatoid arthritis. As there is really no clue as to what this might be, the book rather lacks a continuous theme, and is a collection of disparate chapters, each dealing with particular biochemical systems. Thus we have proteoglycans, enzymes, amino acids, trace elements, and so forth, to each of which is devoted a review of work done in the field, and lines of possible future research are suggested. Again and again, however, Dr. West has to admit that 'the changes described do not appear peculiar to rheumatoid arthritis'.

There is no detailed discussion of immunoglobulins or rheumatoid factor. All the book offers therefore is a collection of loose ends which the author hopes someone may be stimulated to tie up.

Anyone concerned with the biochemistry of the rheumatic diseases will find something to interest him here, but it is difficult to avoid the impression that although the topic as approached by Dr. West would make a good review article, it is somewhat overstretched as a book.

JOHN R. DALY

Rehabilitation of the Severely Disabled.

Part I. Evaluation of a Disabled Living Unit. By R. E. A. GOBLE and P. J. R. NICHOLS. 1971. Pp. 271, 75 figs. Butterworths, London. (£3·50)

Part II. Management. By P. J. R. NICHOLS. 1971. Pp. 448, 74 figs. Butterworths, London. (£6·50)

These books are based on the experience gained at Mary Marlborough Lodge, the Disabled Living Research