BOOK REVIEWS

Elementary Cardiography. By E. N. Chamberlain, N. Coulshed, and E. L. Rubin. (Pp. vii + 141; 139 figures. 27s. 6d.) Bristol: Wright 1962.

The authors write modestly: "This small book is addressed to Medical Students and those Practitioners who have little time for larger works . . . The information is correspondingly limited, elementary and arbitrarily selected". There are four sections; two, electrocardiography and cardiac radiology, are designed to provide an elementary working basis, and the other two, phonocardiography and cardiac catheterization, are brief accounts appropriate for those who wish to know something about these techniques but are unlikely to use them without further study and training.

The section on electrocardiography is clear and straightforward but is obviously modified from a text written before the advent of unipolar leads. Thus 23 pages and 35 figures are given to arrhythmias and heart block and only four pages, including five figures, are devoted to "myocardial infarction, coronary thrombosis and coronary occlusion", terms which, from the single page of text, might seem to be almost interchangeable.

The excellent elementary introduction to cardiac radiology is embellished by good illustrations, admirably reproduced. At the present time, however, it seems inappropriate to devote so much space to syphilitic aneurysms, now comparatively rare, if this necessitates reducing to a minimum the material on congenital heart disease, a subject of much greater current interest and difficulty.

This well-produced book contains a considerable amount of information within a small compass, but it could be improved by more resolute selection of material in relation to contemporary interests.

A. MORGAN JONES

Toxicity of Arsenic Compounds. By W. D. Buchanan. (Elsevier Monographs on Toxic Agents.) (Pp. viii + 155; 6 figures + 4 tables. 25s.) Amsterdam: Elsevier. 1962.

The number of persons exposed to arsenic at work has fallen in recent years, there being a tendency for arsenical compounds to be replaced, for many purposes, by other materials. Thus synthetic pigments have largely substituted for green arsenical pigments, and synthetic insecticides have displaced those based on arsenical salts. The use of various arsenicals in industry is not now an important cause of occupational morbidity and mortality; and modern methods of dust and fume control make it possible to prevent entirely the irritant effect of arsenical dust on the skin and also any systemic poisoning resulting from its inhalation.

However, the very poisonous gas arsine still presents a major hazard in some industries, and an excellent

account of this subject is given here. From the toxicological point of view, arsine is the most important of all arsenic compounds and is responsible for most of the serious cases of poisoning by this metal. Generation of the gas in industry is nearly always unintentional, arising when nascent hydrogen forms in the presence of an arsenic compound. In recent years, poisoning has been reported in the manufacture of zinc salts, in cadmium recovery, in tin refining, when handling non-ferrous metals and drosses, and when making silicon steel, and also on entering vessels containing various acid residues. The greatest preventive measure is still intelligent anticipation of the conditions which might give rise to arsine production.

There is strong evidence to support the view that arsenic can cause cancer of the skin, and certainly in this country it is generally accepted that it does sometimes do this. Moreover there may be a causal relation between the inhalation of arsenic and the development of lung cancer, but this is not established.

In this very useful monograph dealing with all aspects of arsenic, Dr. Buchanan has had access to the reports of the Medical Branch of H.M. Factory Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and so has been able to record many interesting cases of arsenical poisoning which have occurred in the United Kingdom in the past 60 years.

T. G. FAULKNER HUDSON

Carcinogenic and Chronic Toxic Hazards of Aromatic Amines. By T. S. Scott. (Pp. 208; 50 figures + 20 tables. D.s.l. 15) Amsterdam: Elsevier. 1962.

This monograph is composed of three parts. In the first is given the historical background, the chemical structures and uses of aromatic amines in industry, the acute and chronic lesions they produce, and the evidence that metabolites may be responsible for the carcinogenic action.

Part 2 deals with the natural history of occupational bladder tumours and with methods of their diagnosis and treatment. Part 3 deals with the prevention of exposure to carcinogenic amines and with the legal aspect of compensation of workers who develop tumours of the bladder, the renal pelvis, and ureter. Thus, in spite of its title the bulk of this rather discursive book is concerned with bladder cancer and with the amines which may cause it: beta-naphthylamine, 4-aminodiphenyl, and benzidine. In the space of only one-and-a-half pages are mentioned the hepatocarcinogenic amines, such as acetylaminofluorene, azo-dyes etc., and the acute and chronic liver lesions which they induce.

The carcinogenic activity of aromatic amines has been shown recently to be due to their N-hydroxy-metabolites so that the detailed discussion of the previous hypothesis