thing to disagree with on every aspect of social medicine from adolescence to witchcraft.

L. G. NORMAN

Lavorazioni che Espongono All'Azione dei Glicoli, Nitroglicerina e Derivate. By Raffaele Giuliano and Mario Rafanelli. (Pp. 92; 9 figures). Milan: Tipo-Litografico I.N.A.I.L., for Istituto Nazionale per l'Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro, Rome. 1962.

The glycols are the bivalent alcohols with the general formula $C_n H_{2n} (OH)_2$ and all readily polymerize. They readily form ethers, esters, and acetates and are thus very numerous, and their mixture is legion. Their toxicity varies much with their volatility. In adequate dosage most of these products may injure the liver and the kidneys. Some of them appear to form oxalates in the body, and cases of poisoning are known in which oxalate stones formed in the urinary tract.

Ethylene glycol is used as a substitute for glycerine or with it in the manufacture of electrical condensers. Ethylene chlorhydrate is used to accelerate the germination of seeds and in the manufacture of drugs such as novocaine. Another product in this group, ethylene oxide, is an intermediate in the manufacture of many organic products, including solvents, and as an additive in detergents.

In many of the industries in which these compounds are used the processes are complicated and intricate so that great care is needed to avoid accidents.

The nitroglycerine products are used as explosives and mixed with an earthy absorbent form dynamite. The speed of combustion of these materials is related to the proportion of inert base in use and to the state of division.

In manufacture the nitration of the glycerine must be carried out with extreme care. The vapour is toxic so that ventilation or even the use of masks with piped air direct to the workman may be desirable.

Acute psychoses or chronic mental changes may follow exposure. Various chronic symptoms affecting the digestive and respiratory tracts may be encountered.

G. C. PETHER

The Chemical Basis of Carcinogenic Activity. (No. 490 Monograph in the series of American Lectures in Living Chemistry.) By G. M. Badger. (Pp. xiii + 72; illustrated. \$5.00.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1962.

These lectures, according to the editor, have been conceived in order to "advance the newer knowledge of chemical medicine in the cause of clinical practice". The choice of Dr. Badger for this purpose could hardly have been bettered. He has succeeded in condensing a vast amount of data into 60 small pages of this monograph and in presenting them clearly and simply so that they can be understood by non-specialists. He describes in two chapters the historical background of the discovery of carcinogenic aromatic hydrocarbons, their mode of action, and the hazards of their presence in human environment; one chapter each is devoted to aromatic amines, azo-compounds, miscellaneous chemical car-

cinogens, and the significance of carcinogenic compounds. The chapters on carcinogenic hydrocarbons are particularly good, which is not surprising as the author himself has contributed effectively in this field during the last 25 years.

In the introduction the editor quotes, "Science moves but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point". The aptness of this quotation is contradicted by the progress in the field of chemical carcinogenesis which has taken place since this book was written, and reflects rather on the pace of publication. This excellent presentation of the problem stated in the title of the monograph is already out of date. In the field of aromatic amines and azo-dyes an important finding, that metabolic N-hydroxylation transforms these into local carcinogens, clarified this aspect of the complicated metabolism of these compounds. On the other hand, new light has been shed on the possible mechanism of carcinogenesis by the discovery of versatile carcinogenic activity among certain alkyl nitrosamines, alkyl nitrosourethanes, and in particular diazomethane itself.

That the one-carbon unit may be sufficient for carcinogenic action is bound to affect our views on the structural implication of carcinogens.

R. SCHOENTAL

Hygiene and Public Health. By H. D. Chalke. (Pp. 155; 36 figures. 6s.) London: The St. John Ambulance Association of the Order of St. John. 1962.

This is the authorized textbook of the St. John Ambulance Association, but its usefulness seems likely to extend beyond the purposes of that association since it provides a good introduction for all (not excluding medical students) who have an interest in the subjects with which it deals. The whole range is covered briefly but adequately. There are clear diagrams and well chosen illustrations. The claim is made, and we think that it is substantiated, that the book will help readers to think about the subject for themselves. Emphasis is placed on the need for education of the public in health matters, both for its immediate results and also as an aid in securing support for necessary reforms. The contents of this book should prove to be what its author claims that it is, "a guide to wise living and a healthy way of life". It should be of great help in giving instruction to those working in industry.

J. A. STRUTHERS

Survey of Work in Compressed Air, Auckland Harbour Bridge. Compiled by R. J. Rose. (Department of Health Special Report No. 6.) (Pp. 108; 33 figures + 44 tables) Wellington, New Zealand: The Medical Statistics Branch of the Department of Health. 1962.

During the period from May 1956 to October 1958, compressed air work in caissons was used for the founding of the six piers by which the Auckland Harbour Bridge is supported. This report gives in considerable detail a description and an analysis of the compressed air illness that resulted. It is a very valuable addition to the literature on compressed air work, since it displays not only a great deal of the raw statistical data but also extensive and sensible analyses of those data.