The Nails in Disease. By P. D. Samman. (Pp. 130; 126 figs. + 4 colour plates; 40s.) London: Heinemann Medical Books. 1965.

It must be appreciated that this small volume is in the main the result of personal observations of the author. It represents the analysis of nearly 800 patients who presented with nail disorders over the course of seven years. After an initial chapter on the anatomy and physiology of nail growth, chapters are presented on nail changes in various disorders of the body, changes associated with skin diseases, effects of trauma, circulatory changes, etc. The black-and-white pictures and the colour pictures are of a high standard, though some radiographs leave a lot to be desired.

Important facts emerge, e.g., median nail dystrophy undergoes spontaneous healing, and thus cures attributed to the eradication of focal sepsis must be viewed with caution. The author’s views on nail changes associated with alopecia areata and dermatitis are most valuable.

Not only will dermatologists need this book, but physicians who feel the pulse and examine the hand will find this a most useful addition to their libraries.

M. GARRETTs


The main theme of this book is the ‘Cu (I,II)-Peroxy theory’, the essence of which is that ionizing radiation produces organic peroxides which oxidize cuprous to cupric copper in the prosthetic group of cytochrome oxidase. On this basis the whole field of radiobiology is reviewed and explained and further experiments are suggested. In addition to the main theme there are valuable discussions of copper chelates, copper enzymes, copper deficiency, Wilson’s disease, cancer, ageing, antipyresis, and hypothermia. There has long been a need for a book of this sort and this one fills it well, though somewhat marred by careless grammar and by an apparent spread into the text of some of the sales talk on the cover. A book which is not a mere compilation, but which sets out facts (somewhat selected) in a logical order aimed at the propagation of a particular view, is a pleasant change. Many will claim to have thought on similar lines for years but few have been bold enough to defy the taboo against speculation and to state in print which particular combination of unprovable ideas they favour. Some possible bits of speculation seem to have been omitted. There is no mention of antithyroid drugs such as thionuracil nor of the fact that all known lathyrogens are obviously copper-complexing agents (though they do not protect against radiation) or of thalidomide. These and other interesting substances call for many further measurements of cuprous and cupric-complexing constants and of metabolic pathways by a reliable and dedicated experimentalist.

J. ST. L. PHILPOT


The purpose of this book is to present the hypothesis

A. MORGAN JONES
that ‘crypto-infection’ is involved in the causation of auto-immune disease. The author suggests that tissue antigens are altered as a result of infection either with the L-forms of bacteria or with PPLO, or that bacterial episomes invade the host’s genome and induce such infected cells to produce abnormal antigens. An immune response to these abnormal antigens then initiates the auto-immune process.

The subject is introduced by five chapters on bacterial evolution and reproduction (views not generally accepted in bacteriological circles) and on the biology of bacterial L-forms, PPLO, viruses, and episomes. The remaining chapters are concerned with attempts to justify the hypothesis in relation to the various types of auto-immune disease. The evidence is tenuous and the arguments are sometimes based on uncertain premises. In all, the hypothesis is not presented in a convincing manner. This book is certainly not suitable for those not thoroughly familiar with the field of auto-immunity.

G. TAYLOR

BOOKS RECEIVED
(Review in a later issue is not precluded by notice here of books recently received.)


The British Steel Castings Research Association 12th Annual Report, 1965. (Pp. 43; illustrated; no price stated.)


NOTICES

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
A two-week and two one-week intensive courses will be organized by the Department of Occupational Health and Applied Physiology during 1966.

Dust and pulmonary disease: An intensive course on the measurement of airborne dust and its effect on the lung will be held from 14 to 28 February. Fee: 15 guineas.

Measurement and control of noise: Subjects to be covered include physics of noise; measurement of noise; the ear and audiometry; industrial deafness and noise control. To be held from 14 to 18 March. Fee: 7 guineas.

Measurement and control of heat and hot environments: Subjects to be covered include physiology of heat exposure; measurement of heat; limits of heat exposure; control of heat; protective clothing and medical control. To be held from 2 to 6 May. Fee: 7 guineas.

These courses are designed for those with some experience in occupational hygiene and are open to graduates in physics, chemistry, engineering, or medicine.

Further particulars may be obtained from The Registrar, London School of Hygiene, Keppel Street, London, W.C.1.

International Radiation Protection Association
The First International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association will convene in Rome, Italy, September 5-10, 1966. For further information regarding the Congress, contact: Dr. C. Polvani, Secretary General, First International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association, Casella Postale 2359, Roma, Italy.

University of Miami
The Fifth Inter-American Conference on Toxicology and Occupational Medicine will be held in Miami, August 1 to 4, 1966. The conference will be sponsored by the University of Miami School of Medicine assisted by the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine. The highlight of the Conference will be a Symposium on Bladder Cancer. Scientific papers are invited in the fields of general toxicology, occupational medicine, pesticides, air and water pollution, and radiation. For further information contact Wm. B. Deichmann, Ph.D., Professor of Pharmacology and Director of the Research and Teaching Center of Toxicology, University of Miami, School of Medicine, Coral Gables, Florida 33124.

International Society of Agricultural Medicine
The Third International Congress on Rural Medicine will take place on September 26 to 30, 1966, in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, with the following programme: (1) The problem of anthropozoonoses in agriculture; (2) Toxicologic problems in rural hygiene; (3) Ergonomic aspects in agriculture. All correspondence should be addressed to: Doc. Dr. med. D. Rohný, C. Sc., Secretary General of the Third International Congress on Rural Medicine, Bratislava, Ul. čs. armády 40, Czechoslovakia.