ing in dermatoglyphics a great help for early diagnosis.

Dr. Holt, from the Galton Laboratory in London, has largely contributed in the last twenty years to the progress in dermatoglyphic research, mainly through original investigations centering on the quantitative study and interpretation of fingerprints.

In this book, she has now supplemented her own experience with a general account of dermatoglyphics, mainly from the genetic point of view.

The text is divided into three main sections: (1) an introductory account of dermal ridges, their arrangement on palms and fingers, soles and toes, and their normal variability; (2) a detailed account of the quantitative genetics of dermatoglyphics in normal populations, with special respect to fingerprints, their methods of study (total finger ridge count) and their application to the diagnosis of zygosity in twins; (3) finally, dermatoglyphic peculiarities associated to pathologic conditions.

A number of remarks may be ventured.

First of all, the statement that the total finger ridge count be an inherited metrical trait is not entirely acceptable. Digital dermatoglyphics certainly undergo almost complete genetic conditioning; it would be reasonable, however, to consider that genetic factors, rather than acting at a cumulative level for all ten fingers, underlie *single* finger quali-quantitative traits. In fact, although total finger ridge counts in MZ twins show a correlation of approximately 0.95-0.98, single finger values also show remarkably high correlations—slightly lower than those for cumulative values, only on account of their obviously higher random variability.

No account has been given of a large number of conditions in which dermatoglyphic peculiarities have been described: these include schizophrenia, for which thousands of cases have been sofar examined, or important malformative syndromes, such as Brachmann-de Lange syndrome.

Important references are lacking: although Down's syndrome is largely dealt with, no account is given of the fundamental contribution by Beckmann, Gustavson and Norring (1965), defining the possibility of a diagnosis of mongoloidism exclusively based on dermatoglyphic analysis. The same applies to Wendt's original contribution (1955) on the " individuelle Musterwert " for fingerprint studies, and to a large number of sometimes important contributions, especially by non-English scientists. It must be noted, however, that this observation generally applies to any book of this kind, and that it is often impossible, or unfitting, to afford a large number of references.

This book is, nevertheless, highly welcome: in it, Dr. Holt succeeds in filling, at least in part, the gap existing between the publication of Cummins and Midlo's largely known classic in 1943 (reprinted in 1961) and the present status of dermatoglyphic research.

Dr. Holt has to be congratulated on her important work, which deserves the success it will undoubtedly have: geneticists and pediatricians will especially appreciate and welcome it.

P. Parisi

Essai de Classification des Dysplasies Spondylo-Epiphysaires

(Saggio di Classificazione delle Displasie Spondilo-Epifisarie)

Di P. Maroteaux, R. Wiedemann, J. Spranger, K. Kozlowski, L. Lenzi. Collana « Monographies de Génétique Médicale ». Simep Editions. Lyon 1968. Volume di 15 × 24 cm; 95 pagine; 59 illustrazioni in bianco e nero. Prezzo non indicato.

Gli autori, prima di entrare in merito alla classificazione, si preoccupano di delimitare il quadro clinico e porre una definizione precisa della malattia.

Al fine di un inquadramento razionale che prenda in considerazione tutte le sindromi de-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1120962300026032 Published online by Cambridge University Press

scritte, essi propongono una classificazione basata sulla suddivisione delle displasie in tre gruppi: (1) epifisarie; (2) platispondilie generalizzate; (3) epifisi metafisarie.

In questo modo si riesce ad inquadrare abbastanza il complesso capitolo delle displasie spondilo-epifisarie, anche se gli stessi autori sottolineano l'esistenza di numerose lacune, per l'opportunità di rivedere alcuni settori con criteri più precisi.

È inoltre necessario intensificare le ricerche sulla fisiopatologia, ancora completamente sconosciuta, e insistere sull'importanza di stabilire una nomenclatura internazionale al fine di evitare errori di classificazione e semplificare il lavoro ai ricercatori.

G. Del Porto

Elsevier's Dictionary of Pharmaceutical Science and Techniques

Vol. 1: Pharmaceutical Technology

(Dizionario Elsevier della Scienza e delle Tecniche Farmaceutiche)

(Vol. 1: Tecnologia Farmaceutica)

Di A. Sliosberg (Paris). Pubblicato da Elsevier Publishing Co. Amsterdam 1968. Volume di 15 x 29 cm; XII + 686 pagine. 10000 voci in Inglese, Francese, Italiano, Spagnolo e Tedesco. Prezzo Dfl. 85.00 (US $ 25.00 circa).

Questo Volume del Dizionario della Scienza e delle Tecniche Farmaceutiche fa seguito al « Medical Dictionary » di A. Sliosberg e precede il Volume 2 dell'opera in recensione.

Si tratta di un prezioso volume di consultazione, non solo per chi si occupa di farmacologia, ma anche (e forse più) per chi non se ne occupa direttamente, ma per ragioni svariate di ricerca o di cultura deve adoperare dei termini di questo settore di cui non conosce gli equivalenti in inglese, francese, spagnolo e tedesco.

L'organizzazione del dizionario è originale e consiste in una « base », data dall'elencazione alfabetica dei termini specialistici in inglese con i termini equivalenti nelle altre quattro lingue (fra cui l'italiano), e poi nei quattro elenchi, uno per ciascuna lingua, dove per ogni voce vi è il rimando alla « base ».

La fatica di A. Sliosberg è degna di elogio, anzi di gratitudine.

L. Gedda

Éléments de Biologie Cellulaire

(Elements of Cell Biology)

By J. M. Legay, M. Pavans De Ceccatty, G. Ducet, Ph. Lebreton (Lyon and Marseille). Editions Médicales Flammarion. Paris 1968. Paperback; 14.5 x 20 cm; 298 pages; schemes and 74 illustrations. Price 19 F (approx. $ 3.50).

Éléments de Biologie Animale

(Elements of Animal Biology)

By J. David, R. Ginet, J. M. Legay, P. Lubet, J. Signoret (Lyon and Caen). Editions Médicales Flammarion. Paris 1969. Paperback; 14.5 x 20 cm; 530 pages; tables, schemes and 231 illustrations. Price 29.50 F (approx. $ 6.00).

Éléments de Biologie Humaine

(Elements of Human Biology)

By J. M. Legay, J. C. Czyba, P. Dubois, Ch. Girod (Lyon). Editions Médicales Flammarion. Paris 1968. Paperback; 14.5 x 20 cm; 328 pages; tables and 124 illustrations (including one colored plate). Price 22 F (approx. $ 4.50).

A textbook in three independent volumes directed to both medical and biological students, carefully organized and clearly illustrated by means of schematic illustrations. It is the result of a close co-operation among the different authors—all present or past scientific or medical professors.

Vol. 1 deals with cell structure and division, cell energy and enzymes—including the main phenomena of energy fixation and utilization—and the organization of Metazoa, the problems of cell differentiation and the classification and definition of the different tissues and systems.

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