

# Books

## Radioisotope Therapy

**A Manual of Artificial Radioisotope Therapy.** Ed. by Paul F. Hahn. 310 pp. Academic Press, Inc., New York, 1951. \$6.80.

This book is directed on the one hand to physicists desirous of obtaining a quick review of the biophysical aspects of therapy using radioactive isotopes, and on the other hand to clinical radiologists who desire a briefing on present procedures. The table of contents includes chapters on terminology and standards for the use of radioactive isotopes, dosimetry, use of radio-phosphorus in the treatment of polycythemia vera and the leukemias, use of radioactive iodine in the diagnosis and treatment of hyperthyroidism and in the study and treatment of carcinoma of the thyroid, radioactive colloids in the treatment of lymphoid-macrophage diseases, tumor therapy by direct infiltration of colloidal gold, instrumentation for a therapy program, health physics, autoradiography, the availability of isotopes and means of procurement, and the planning of the radioisotope program in the hospital. The distinguished list of contributors includes: A. H. Dowdy, R. D. Evans, P. F. Hahn, E. H. Quimby, C. F. Stroebel, B. E. Hall, J. B. Hursh, J. W. Karr, R. W. Rawson, J. B. Trunnell, R. L. Weiland, K. C. Morgan, C. P. LeBlond, J. Gross, C. V. Brastrup, and P. C. Aebersold.

It can be seen that coverage in this field is adequate and that in this one book sufficient information should be available for most readers to make a good sampling of the field of radioisotope therapy. The general quality of the articles is good and the reliability of the material presented guaranteed by the reputations of the contributors.

In a rapidly developing field such as this one, it is inevitable that a manual of this type cannot hope to avoid obsolescence in a rather short time. However, prior to the publication of the present volume no book was available in which representative tested procedures were gathered together for examination as a whole.

A unique and useful feature is a chapter on the criteria for the use of radioactive isotopes. The writer, P. F. Hahn (who is also the editor), has not been timid about approaching his subject. Thus, on page 23: "with little risk of disagreement one might categorically state that had radium been discovered in the past five or ten years rather than thirty years ago it would never have been used in the treatment of a single tumor." Many conventional radiologists will rise in anger at this state-

ment. Nevertheless, Dr. Hahn continues on to make a strong case for this statement. This is a fair indication of the general style of the chapter and of the provocativeness of some of the material.

It is to be hoped that this book will accomplish the purpose of stirring up interest and excitement among the clinical radiologists, thereby provoking some of them to examine concepts with which they had been comfortable for so many years. The recent developments in radiation physics with their accompanying proliferation into the field of radiology require much more extensive training of radiologists than has been available in the past. It is quite evident that books such as this one are needed to help in indoctrination and education.

Quite probably a definitive volume or manual on radiotherapeutic procedures will not be possible for a long time. In the present state of development of the field, the present volume should be very useful for easing practitioners, both physical and medical, past the many initial hurdles which they may encounter.

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## Cosmogonous

**The Origin of the Earth.** By W. M. Smart. 239 pp. Cambridge University Press, London, 1951. \$2.75.

Apparently it is one of the required functions of English astronomers to write popular accounts of their work. Eddington and Jeans come to mind immediately as perhaps the most notable examples of this predilection, and it would seem on the basis of this volume that Professor Smart is well qualified to follow them in this direction.

The title of the book is in a sense misleading, since only one chapter of the ten is specifically concerned with the origin of the earth and of the solar system. In the others, everything from paleontology to astrophysics which has any degree of relevance is discussed, not excluding the atomic bomb. The author has an extremely engaging style, intelligent and lucid, which, although no previous knowledge of the subject is assumed, nevertheless does not condescend to its intended audience. On the whole, the material is presented in an easily comprehensible manner, and comparatively little, no matter whether seemingly simple or abstruse, that is necessary for complete understanding to the layman is neglected or merely glossed over.

The first few chapters are concerned principally with a description of the solar system and its contents. The known characteristics of the sun, the earth itself, the various planets and satellites, comets, and meteors are covered, along with the methods employed in the determination of some of their less obvious features. One inexplicable omission here is the lack of any mention of Bode's law of planet distance, which was in the past one of the most influential empirical laws of the solar system and which has relevance today in connection with theories of the origin of the solar system.