Clinical Chemistry in Practical Medicine (ed. 4)
C. P. STEWART and D. M. DUNLOP. Baltimore, Md., The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1954, 320 pp., $5.00

The authors have set as their goal a discussion of the application of clinical chemistry to the everyday practice of clinical medicine. The book is intended to give the clinician and the senior medical student the knowledge of biochemical backgrounds where a chemical examination may be helpful, and the interpretation and significance to be placed on the laboratory results.

The reviewer has been impressed with the authors’ awareness of the problems of the laboratory in their everyday dealings with the practicing physician. Throughout the book the reader is reminded of this; for example: “[though] chemical methods have established their right to be considered among the major aids of diagnostic medicine . . . [laboratory tests] supplement, but do not replace examination of the patient”; and “…if analysts are relieved of the necessity of doing useless work, the quality and therefore the value of the remainder is more likely to be maintained at a high level.”

The chapters are well organized and the discussions are clearly presented. It must be remembered that the authors have always kept in mind their intended audience, and therefore the practicing biochemist and research worker may find the subject-matter presentation shallow.

Good discussions are found in the chapters “Water and Electrolyte Metabolism,” “Neutrality Regulation,” “Carbohydrate Metabolism,” “Renal Function,” “Plasma Proteins,” “Tests of Gastric, Pancreatic and Hepatic Functions,” “Cerebrospinal Fluid,” and “Calcium and Phosphorus.”

In the chapter “Thyroid Function,” the basal metabolism determination is given preference. Under this heading there is also an adequate presentation of the use of radioactive iodine. The protein bound iodine determination is not mentioned.

The appendices contain a selection of simple methods which the practicing physician can perform as part of the office routine and a description of the clinical chemical procedures and laboratory methodology which are in use in the authors’ laboratories.

Though references for further reading are not given, this book would make a good basic text for instruction of residents, interns, and technicians assigned to the clinical chemistry laboratory.