
Microscopic Anatomy of the Vertebrates

Dr. Kendall's recent revision of "The Microscopic Anatomy of the Vertebrates," of which he was originally coauthor with Professor Scott, offers a different arrangement and method of presentation which should fit well into beginning courses in histology as they are offered in many Arts College curricula. The author has adhered to the policy of keeping the book small, but it appears that in some instances even the descriptive material is exceedingly abridged. Kendall purposely has avoided the pitfalls of attempting to correlate structure with function. Although that may be dangerous ground on which to tread, it appears that an understanding of modern histology is incomplete without some acquaintance with at least the better established histochemical and histophysiological interpretations commonly accepted by the students of microscopic anatomy.

The book is unique in that the histology and organology of many organs is presented as it appears in each of three or more classes of vertebrates. In this respect the text approaches the requirements of many instructors who offer courses in Comparative Vertebrate Histology. Since this was not the author's objective no word of criticism is voiced but it would be most gratifying to many of us to see a truly comparative histology appear on the booklists. At the present time I believe Kendall's revision is the best approach to a concise treatment in comparative histology even though it was not so designed. The author has made many improvements in the figures, but certain areas are still woefully deficient in the quality of the photographs. The passages on the kidney and endocrines are especially weak in illustrative material. The book would be greatly improved by enlarging all illustrations to bring into relief much detail so important to students of histology.

The reviewer is fully aware of the difficulties confronted by the author in attempting to assemble comparable photographs of good quality to meet the objectives of the text. The literature is vast and scattered and contains a dearth of excellent photographs which would be appropriate for use here. The author is faced with the problem of obtaining tissues from a wide variety of animals, making preparations, and finally solving photomicrographic problems. It is therefore with a feeling of constructive criticism that these suggestions are made.

—Clinton M. Osborn.

Microscopic Anatomy of Vertebrates, by James I. Kendall. 342 pp. Philadelphia, Lea and Febiger, 1940.