Gestational Trophoblastic Disease. Ed AE Szulman, HJ Buchsbaum. (Pp 192; 69 figs.; DM 140.) Springer. 1987. ISBN 0-540-96443-6.

Despite, or paradoxically due to, its comparative rarity, there has been a spate of publications on the subject of trophoblastic disease in the past few years and one might be forgiven for believing that the market is now saturated. The dramatic advances which have recently been made in all aspects of this fascinating disease more than justify the decision to produce this volume, which appears in the series *Clinical Perspectives in Obstetrics and Gynecology*. The editors have assembled a talented array of acknowledged experts to provide a comprehensive review of the pathology, genetics, epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment of gestational trophoblastic disease. This is a concise but authoritative text, well illustrated, up to date, and lavishly referenced. It will certainly be of value to pathologists who have a heavy gynaecological pathology workload, but the price of nearly £50 for a volume of less than 200 pages may deter those with more general interests.

CW ELSTON

Molecular Approaches to Human Polygenic Disease. Ciba Foundation Symposium 130 (Pp 274; £28.95.) John Wiley. 1987. ISBN 0-471-91096 1.

The Ciba Foundation is renowned for its prestigious symposia on important topical subjects, with eminent speakers from different scientific and clinical disciplines, and with rapid publication of the proceedings including the discussions which are skilfully edited into readable prose. The 130th symposium under the Chairmanship of Sir David Weatherall fulfilled all these criteria. Its objective was to define the problems of multi factorial inheritance and its analysis by recombinant DNA technology so as to determine which directions this field might follow in the future. Human gene mapping was described by Robert Williamson, and WF Bodmer discussed the complex problems involved in attempts to sort out the different effect of several genes as well as the environment, all of which may be implicated in a disease. The importance of HLA in various diseases was described by JI Bell, whilst several papers were devoted to the control of lipid metabolism and genetic

factors in the aetiology of atherosclerotic disease. Motulsky described the genetic control of erythrocyte sodium and lithium transport, and the use of the red cell membrane as a surrogate for smooth muscle and renal cells, thus providing a model for hypertension in investigations on the mechanism of blood pressure elevation at the molecular level. There are other chapters on diabetes mellitus, psychiatric disorders, and finally a forecast of the future of gene therapy by MA Eglitis.

This is a stimulating book which gives the reader an opportunity to enjoy something of the atmosphere of the symposium and to appreciate the extent to which medical practice is likely to be influenced in the future by developments in molecular genetics.

SM LEWIS

Outlines and Review of Pathology. 2nd ed H Braunstein. (Pp 526; soft cover £19.50.) Blackwells. 1987. ISBN 0-8016-0647-0.

Although this book is entitled *Outlines and Review of Pathology* it is so packed with information that the word "outlines" seems scarcely appropriate. There is no real attempt at synthesis—no coherence—that the word "outlines" is ultimately justified. I felt daunted and eventually overwhelmed by this text. The information is so concentrated as to be almost indigestible. My mental faculties failed at page 83 when I read that the general features of ageing were "Universality, progressiveness, intrinsicness and deleteriousness (senescence)". We are enjoined to use the outline in conjunction with a conventional textbook, so at 489 pages with double columns of small typeset this is "mega-lecture notes". This text is unlikely to be of any value to British undergraduate medical students and, indeed, it is difficult to see who, on this side of the Atlantic, might find a use for it. It is perhaps best confined to the bookshelves of eccentric teachers of pathology.

J MCCLURE

Clinical Laboratory Science in the Changing Scene of Health Care. Ed JP Ashby. (Pp 132; £27.50.) MTP Press Limited. 1986. ISBN 0 85200 685 3.

This is an interesting small book reporting the content of the Proceedings of the Sixth ECCLS Seminar held in West Germany in May 1985. Like so many proceedings its gestation has been long: it is rather a disjointed publication with insufficient time and space to consider some relevant points in depth.

Various authors discuss the concept of health and health care in Europe with a discussion of the current economic, technical, and political pressures which affect health care delivery. In the consideration of present and future standards attention is drawn to those written and material standards which are available through ECCLS and Governmental agencies, and an indication is also given of the activity which might improve standards in the future.

It is a book of interest to all who think seriously about the future of laboratory services in Europe, highlighting many of the important constraints which may be applicable.

GW PENNINGTON

Clinical Microbiology. 6th ed. E Joan Stokes, GL Ridgway. (Pp 338; soft cover £19.50.) Edward Arnold. 1987. ISBN 0 7131 4532 3.

It is pleasing to see a new edition of this well established text book of microbiology. It has over the years become an indispensable part of the training of microbiologists to consult this manual. The new edition has been upgraded to include sections on fungal and parasitic diseases which is particularly pleasing as these have become steadily more important and within the scope of the general microbiologist. Illustrations of the most important intestinal parasites have been included which is a useful adjunct. I was surprised that there were not similar pictures of the blood borne parasites such as malaria. The sections on bacteriology are concise and clear and reflect the practical side of the subject.

J BURNIE