Book Reviews


The subjects learnt by medical students tend to be fragmented and each specialist is apt to consider his own field without relation to clinical disease. This is true even in immunology, although this subject throws light on diseases as diverse as systemic lupus erythematosus and malignant melanoma.

It is, however, difficult to write a good textbook of immunology for medical students. This is in part because those not immerred in the field lack the knowledge to write it, while those with detailed knowledge of immunology often lack a feeling for the needs of the medical student and the motivation to write a didactic text. Moreover, the temptation is to write a book which is too detailed and is directed towards the fundamental rather than the clinical aspects of the subject. Dr Turk has succeeded in writing a clear and fairly dogmatic account of immunology which covers most of the field and is not confined to his own special interests. The scope of the book is well described in the preface. He states that a textbook of immunology 'should discuss the immunological concepts underlying disease processes rather than the principles behind laboratory tests' and correctly emphasizes that books of multiple authorship often present either a 'confusion of opinions' or omit important topics. The bibliography is a valuable feature of the book and should serve to entice research-minded students into laboratory work.

The outline of fundamental immunology deals somewhat cursorily with the involvement of both thymus- and bone marrow-derived cells in immune responses, and the existence of high and low tolerance might have been emphasized because of its relevance to the possibility of deliberately inducing tolerance with transplantation antigens in humans. The value of the book would be increased if the principles and significance of common immunological tests were gathered together in the appendix. A glossary of immunology terms would also help. There are a few minor errors of interpretation which presumably will be altered in the second edition.

This book can be wholeheartedly recommended to medical students and it is pleasing to see a good text book written this side of the Atlantic.

G. L. ASHERSON


In May 1968 the Netherlands Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service celebrated the 25th anniversary of the founding of its Central Laboratory in Amsterdam. All who have been privileged to visit this centre during those years have always returned home transfused and enthused by the high standard of research being undertaken. This special number of Vox Sanginis contains 23 papers read by distinguished immunohematologists from western Europe and North America at the 25th Anniversary Conference, and is not only a valuable survey of immunopathology and blood transfusion as they are being currently developed but also a fitting tribute to the outstanding contribution made by Professor J. J. van Loghem, director of the Central Laboratory, and his staff to progress in this field.

The papers fall into three sections: recent advances in immunopathology and blood transfusion; autoimmunity in mice and man; the optimal use of human blood. Included also are the post-lecture discussions and a report of a glutathione workshop held during the Conference.

G. F. TOVEY


This is the third issue in the World Health Organization’s series devoted to the ‘Histological typing of tumours’: those relating to lung tumours and breast tumours were published in 1967 and 1968 respectively. The present publication comprises 152 photomicrographic colour transparencies (35 mm) and an accompanying booklet. The booklet contains 150 colour plates illustrating the histological appearances of many varieties of soft tissue neoplasia, together with a short text in which the tumours are defined, classified (where possible) according to histogenesis and behaviour, and their microscopic structure is briefly described. A number of non-neoplastic, tumour-like, proliferative lesions (such as myositis ossificans and proliferative myositis) are also defined and illustrated. No attempt is made to give detailed histological descriptions, and there is no bibliography. The collection of slides should prove to be of considerable value for postgraduate instruction, especially in relatively small centres where it would take many years to accumulate such a comprehensive set of photomicrographs. The fact that 16 pathologists in 14 countries collaborated in the production of the proposed classification of soft-tissue tumours is indicative of the advances now being made towards international agreement in the complex field of tumour nomenclature. All such collaborative efforts should be supported, and further publications in this WHO series will be welcome.

N. F. C. GOWING
