It is a significant achievement for two authors to have produced such a large and detailed treatise and there can be no doubt that it will be widely used.

JM ENGLAND


This well produced book is the report of a workshop held in January 1983 at Munich. The 26 papers are grouped into 3 “chapters” entitled histopathology and virology, clinical virology and cellular immunology, and haemodynamics and therapeutic aspects. This grouping is, however, very arbitrary with, for example, papers on diagnostic histopathology appearing in the first and last chapters.

The book has two main themes, acute viral myocarditis and dilated cardiomyopathy. The relationship between these two is explored and the studies presented point to a possible progression from viral myocarditis to dilated cardiomyopathy. This is not thought to be a direct result of viral damage to myocytes but is associated with a depression of suppressor T cell function. The suggestion is made in one paper that this altered T cell activity may be related to certain HLA types. In this latter paper as in most of the others the number of cases studied is small so that the conclusions have to be tentative.

This book is to be recommended for those who are interested in the problems of biopsy diagnosis of myocarditis, in the serological investigation of myocarditic and congestive myopathic patients, and in the clinical distinction between these two conditions.

PGI STOVIN


Medical Laboratory Haematology, as the title implies, is intended for laboratory workers and not for clinicians. The emphasis is therefore on the physiology and pathophysiology of blood disorders rather than on the clinical and therapeutic aspects. Practical details are also given of the commonest investigations.

Somewhat surprisingly blood group serology is excluded but this may reflect the separation of transfusion in the special examinations of the IMLS. I imagine that the book is primarily intended for candidates of the Haematology Special Examination but there is still much that will be of use to medical staff in training. Each chapter is well referenced though there must have been some delay in publication since the articles cited seem to stop fairly abruptly in 1981 with only a handful from 1982.


This is a short monograph on anti-nuclear antibodies. There have been many recent advances in the study of nuclear antigens and auto-antibodies which react with them in connective tissue diseases, and clinicians and laboratory workers will need to be kept up to date on progress. The text covers the main areas of work in this field. This includes the types of antibodies which are currently recognised and the methods of their detection. It gives details on both indirect immunofluorescence and counter immunoelectrophoresis. In addition to the methodological aspects the book provides a brief clinical resume of the conditions which give rise to anti-nuclear antibodies. I found this an easily readable book and the text was lucid. Unfortunately there were areas where too much irrelevant technical detail was given; for example, detailed descriptions of how fluorescent microscopes should be set up, or a list of the diagnostic criteria for rheumatoid arthritis. It also misses out on a completely balanced approach. It did not describe all the methods which can be used to detect these antibodies, neither does it allude to the dif-

Book reviews