Book reviews

Tissue Typing Techniques By Heather M. Dick and W. Barry Crichton. (Pp. vii + 152; illustrated. £2.50.) Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1972.

Does this book fill a gap in the book-shelf of a tissue typing laboratory? The answer is yes—even although most of the information is already available from other sources such as the 'Manual of tissue typing techniques', in which each technique is submitted by the protagonist. Dr Dick and Mr Crichton have written a cookery book rather than providing a list of recipes. The technical details are given clearly and precisely, salted with useful anecdotes. The presentation of the genetical aspects, regrettably, cannot be commended. The introduction, in particular, illustrates this weakness. The figures do not promote understanding: the first is an enigma and in the second the chromosomes could have been distributed to the children figuratively.

In the chapters on methodology the authors succeed in their task of providing instruction in tissue typing techniques. They deal competently with the subjects of the preparation of antigens for tissue typing (their advice on the separation of lymphocytes in blood samples from cadaver donors is particularly helpful), lymphocytotoxicity tests using a micro-method, complement-fixation tests, typing sera, and cell and reagent preservation. In the context of the storage of lymphocytes it is a pity that the simpler methods of freezing not requiring expensive apparatus were not mentioned.

The chapter on the applications of tissue typing which includes paragraphs on genetics, HL-A and disease, and paternity testing is not completely up to date. For example, genetical linkage of the HL-A locus to that for haptoglobin has been refuted by the team making the original claim.

Although the presence in a child of an HL-A antigen not found in either parent would be convincing evidence of illegitimacy, a recombination frequency of the order of 1% must be taken very seriously in assessing the role of HL-A typing in paternity testing.

Concerning the chapter on other tests for histocompatibility, it is probable that the locus controlling MLR (mixed

lymphocyte reaction) although sited on the same chromosome close to the HL-A loci is a separate genetic entity. This view is not given by the authors.

A very useful appendix contains a list of equipment and reagents with names and addresses of suppliers when relevant.

SYLVIA D. LAWLER

¹Manual of Tissue Typing Techniques (1972). Ed. Ray J. G., Jr., Scott, R. C., Hare, B. M., Harris, C. E., and Kayhoe, D. E., National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, U.S.A.

An Introduction to the General Pathology of Tumours By David J. B. Ashley. (Pp. 120; 16 figures. £2.00.) Bristol: John Wright and Sons Ltd. 1972.

This short text of approximately 100 pages is an attempt to present a concise résumé of the general medical and scientific principles of neoplastic disease in man for use by the undergraduate and postgraduate clinical oncologist. It is written in a clear, readable but didactic style and contains some interesting chapters, particularly those relating to hormones, immunity, and tumours.

However, it would have been of value if some attempt had been made to discuss alternative interpretations of or to give appropriate references for observations of the neoplastic process which are open to debate. On account of this and the poor quality of the illustrative photomicrographs of different neoplasms, this is not a textbook which can be recommended as the sole source of recent information and is best read in conjunction with a more detailed oncological text.

A. MUNRO NEVILLE

Virus Morphology By C. R. Madeley. (Pp. vii + 179; illustrated. £2.50.) Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1972.

The electron microscope was developed during the 1930s and the first virus to be seen by this form of microscopy was the tobacco mosaic virus in 1939. Since then electron microscopy has advanced considerably with improved design of the instruments and with new staining methods, as a result of which we now have a completely new concept of the size, shape, and structure of many animal and plant viruses.

In this new book on virus morphology

the author has brought together many useful and interesting facts concerning the complex and diverse structure of virus particles. For those not conversant with electron-microscopy techniques this book will be of great value, especially the introductory notes on virus structure, staining methods, and the glossary of descriptive terms. The main part of the book is devoted to a series of electron micrographs of both RNA and DNA viruses, including those of cubic and helical symmetry, and those with a more complex symmetry. The illustrations are of an extremely high quality. This book will be of great interest to virologists, both teachers and diagnosticians, and to students at school and university.

J. A. DUDGEON

Chemotherapy of Chronic Bronchitis and Allied Disorders 2nd ed. By Robert J. May. (Pp. x + 117; illustrated. £1.95.) London: English Universities Press. 1972.

Both clinicians and bacteriologists who deal with the diagnosis and treatment of chronic bronchitis have reason to be grateful to Professor May for his work in this field and for publishing a concise account of it intelligible to both clinical and laboratory workers. This second edition includes new serological evidence of the importance of *Haemophilus influenzae* and an assessment of new drugs is included.

In the laboratory the problem of recognizing *Haemophilus* underlying coliform contaminants is emphasized but the technique now commonly used of liquifying and diluting the sample so that the most numerous organism, the *Haemophilus*, can be recovered is not mentioned.

A serious misunderstanding may arise from the tables and properties of drugs in the treatment of staphylococcal pneumonia. *Staph. aureus* is listed under both amoxycillin and ampicillin and neither of these drugs should be recommended for treatment of staphylococcal infection. When staphylococci are sensitive penicillin is the drug of choice, when they are resistant one of the penicillinase-resistant penicillins or another drug must be chosen. Not all readers can be expected to know that resistant staphylococci are invariably penicillinase producers and are much commoner than sensitive strains.

Most people now would reserve carbenicillin, preferably with gentamicin

to prevent the development of resistance for the treatment of serious *Pseudomonas* and some *Proteus* infections. Anyone reading this book might use it in small doses to treat chronic bronchitis! I am sure that is not what Professor May intended.

Both these potential misunderstandings could be avoided by small alterations to the text and I hope this may be possible when this useful book is reprinted.

E. J. STOKES

Hepatitis and Blood Transfusion Edited by Girish N. Vyas, Herbert A. Perkins, and Rudi Schmid. (Pp. xviii + 428; illustrated. £7.40.) New York and London: Grune and Stratton. 1972.

This book reports the proceedings of a symposium held in San Francisco in March 1972. The symposium was organized in connexion with a meeting of blood transfusion workers but its scope also extended to the clinical and virological aspects of hepatitis. Many of the most active American groups presented papers and much of the material is not yet available elsewhere. The Editors are to be congratulated on their feat of producing this large book, which contains no less than 59 papers by about 90 authors, within six months of the meeting itself.

Much of the atmosphere of the symposium is conveyed as one reads the papers and the editorial process has not eliminated the characteristic styles of the different speakers. The direct reproduction of the typescripts and the uneven quality of the illustrations are therefore readily forgiven. One regret is that the 'discussion' sections consist of formal papers amplifying or modifying the major presentations. Presumably the true discussion proved too lively to record and edit.

Active workers on hepatitis problems will find a gold mine of results and ideas in this book. It also provides an interesting and readable survey of current activity for the more general reader but the kaleidoscopic effect of the many papers would certainly prove confusing for those seeking an introductory account.

Some of the papers, such as those by Drs Krugman and Giles and by Dr Blumberg, are review-summaries of a distinguished series of papers from a single group. Others, such as those by

Dr Redeker and Dr Chalmers, report extensive experience in applying Australia antigen testing in clinical situations. The problems associated with the introduction of hyperimmune globulin are aired by Drs Prince and Krugman and there are interesting papers about technical methods including subtyping (Dr Le Bouvier and Dr Gocke), radio-immunoassay (Dr Aach and others), and latex agglutination (Dr Perkins and others).

The section dealing with basic problems, such as the propagation of 'hepatitis' agents, is predictably the least satisfactory and reveals all too clearly the lack of real progress in understanding the nature of hepatitis.

One interesting feature of the book is its bibliography. A single list containing about 500 references has been compiled for the entire volume and should prove useful in its own right. Its value is reduced, however, because room was not found for the titles. The bibliography contains very few references to foreign language journals demonstrating once more the lack of satisfactory communication between workers in different countries.

'Hepatitis and blood transfusion' overall is an admirable account of a very interesting meeting. It is likely to be read in subsequent years for the light it casts on the development of ideas during the search for the hepatitis virus.

What a pity it is so expensive.

YVONNE E. COSSART

Data Processing and Computers in Clinical Pathology By M. D. Buckley-Sharp. A feasibility study for the Bland-Sutton Institute and Related Laboratories of the Middlesex Hospital Medical School. (Pp. 120; illustrated. £1.50.) London: Department for Research and Service in (Medical) Education. School of Pathology, Middlesex Hospital Medical School. 1972.

This book is a copy of a report prepared by the author for his colleagues in the Department for Research and Service in (Medical) Education and the School of Pathology, Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London. The report is concerned with a survey of the use of computers in clinical pathology. The author reports on six possible computer systems in some 30 pages; the preamble to the description takes 78 pages.

The author states on page 107 that the reader may be forgiven for reaching this final part of the report 'in a state of some confusion'. It was difficult to find any systematic pattern in the treatment of the subject. Out of such confusion the author concludes that computers will be as commonplace in clinical laboratories as automatic equipment is at the present time. If so, then such a conclusion should not be a statement of faith, but requires to be logically argued. Such an approach cannot be identified by your reviewer in this publication.

T. P. WHITEHEAD

International Society of Haematology

The Third Meeting of the European and African Division of the International Society of Haematology will be held in London at the Royal Festival Hall on 24-28 August, 1975 (President Professor J. V. C. Dacie FRS; Secretary Dr S. Lewis).

The scientific programme will include reviews, presentation of new work, round table, panel discussions on practical aspects of the subjects, and workshops on specialized topics.

The main sessions will be on hereditary haemolytic anaemias, thrombosis and haemostasis, immuno-haematology, erythropoiesis, aplastic anaemia, leukaemia, haemoglobin, thalassaemia, haemoglobinopathies, nutritional anaemias, lymphomas, and myeloma.

There will be an exhibition of technical equipment, laboratory instruments, and pharmaceutical products. There will also be scientific demonstrations and scientific film shows.

The official language of the meeting will be English.

Further information can be obtained from: Dr S. M. Lewis, Department of Haematology, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Ducane Road, London, W12 0HS.