

Book reviews

Blood Transfusion in Clinical Medicine 5th ed. Edited by P. L. Mollison. (Pp. xviii + 830; illustrated. £8-00.) Oxford, London, Edinburgh, and Melbourne: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1972.

In the five years which have passed since the previous edition of 'Mollison' there has been further progress in practices related to blood transfusion. The prevention of rhesus factor sensitization, the use of cryoprecipitates, of platelet concentrates, the detection and significance of Australia antigen, the advent of automation in blood grouping—these and many other advances are fully documented in the new edition. There is evidence that every section has been carefully brought up to date and over a third of the references have been published within the last five years. In other respects the book retains the high standard of previous editions. Errors, if they exist, are difficult to find—in my department a prize for spotting any error remains as yet unclaimed. For practising haematologists, whatever their budget, this will be a 'must'.

H. E. M. KAY

Treatment of Haemoglobinopathies and Allied Disorders Report of a WHO Scientific Group. World Health Organization Technical Report Series No. 509. (Pp. 83. 50p.) Geneva: World Health Organization. 1972. Available through H.M. Stationery Office, London.

The earlier WHO communication on the haemoglobinopathies and glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency was of undoubted value because at that time it was difficult to obtain similar information from other sources. Nowadays, the flood of both papers and review articles on these topics makes the value of the present report (83 pages) more problematical.

The main body of the text contains a vista of information which, of necessity, has to be at an elementary level, ranging from the structure of the haemoglobin molecule to the problems associated with the antenatal diagnosis of sickle-cell anaemia by amniocentesis.

One wonders in a small booklet entitled 'Treatment of haemoglobinopathies and allied disorders' why it was necessary

to allocate 23 pages to tables listing rare haemoglobin and G-6-P-D variants, the vast majority of which require no treatment. The practical section (nine pages) lists, but does not describe in detail, tests likely to be suitable for detecting both physiological and abnormal haemoglobins. The relative prominence given to the use of acrylamide gel as an electrophoretic medium and the unqualified recommendation of the still little evaluated 'crystallization test' to recognize haemoglobin C is surprising.

The authors, who gathered together in 1971, have attempted to provide a comprehensive guide which is not limited to treatment and is suitable for a wide range of readers. The resulting pot-pourri of expertise will interest both laboratory and medical staff seeing patients possessing the disease processes covered in this WHO report.

R. G. HUNTSMAN

Color Atlas and Textbook of Macropathology By W Sandritter, C. Thomas, and W. H. Kirsten. (Pp. xiv + 355; illustrated. £19-00.) London: Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd. Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc. 1972.

This elegant, superbly illustrated and inevitably costly colour atlas describes itself in the preface as a 'bait' to learn organ pathology. This it certainly is. It deals first with generalities of organ size, shape, and colour, and with necropsy reporting. Each system and organ is then taken in turn and all the important gross pathological changes are illustrated by colour photographs of very high quality. Just one criticism has to be levelled against these pictures and that is that too many of them are impaired by the presence of numerous confusing highlights over moist surfaces. Many of the plates illustrating lesions of the urinary bladder are particularly marred in this way. Another fault is that no mention of magnification or reduction factors is made in describing the plates. Furthermore, it is shocking to see coronary artery stenosis demonstrated by a specimen in which the arteries have been slit longitudinally with scissors.

The text, which occupies roughly the same space as the illustrations, is commendably brief but packs in a lot of information. Unfortunately a rather Germanic flavour is retained: not all will immediately recognize osteodystrophia

generalisata as the bone lesion of hyperparathyroidism.

Taken all in all this is a volume that most histopathologists and trainees will enjoy browsing through in an arm chair. It could be useful for revision purposes the night before a practical examination but it cannot replace a real experience in the post-mortem room or in a well-annotated pathological museum. At best it is an expensive luxury.

THEO CRAWFORD

Ontogeny of Acquired Immunity A Ciba Foundation Symposium. (Pp. ix + 283; illustrated. £4-25.) Amsterdam: Elsevier Excerpta Medica, North-Holland. Associated Scientific Publishers. 1972.

Despite the present expansion of our knowledge of mechanisms of immunity immunology is still only sparsely taught as a formal discipline, though there now exist some excellent general textbooks of the subject. In such a rapidly changing field, adequate summaries of contemporary research are particularly valuable and this book is one of the best. A selection of papers was given at a Ciba symposium in November of 1971. Following the papers the discussions were recorded and they follow the formal papers in the book. Various aspects of the development of some of the components of the immunological apparatus are dealt with. The collection of authors includes many world authorities on their topics and the whole volume makes fascinating and illuminating reading. The book should be a required text for professional immunologists and will in addition be extremely useful for those more on the periphery of the subject who wish to inform themselves better on some of the mysteries of the ontogeny of acquired immunity. The book is beautifully presented and a credit to both the editors and the scientific contributors.

A. J. S. DAVIES