Book reviews

The Reticuloendothelial System: International Academy of Pathology Monograph. Edited by John W. Rebeck, Costan W. Berard, and Murray R. Abell. (Pp. xiv + 328; illustrated; no price given.) Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins. 1975.

This is a book for browsing in; it contains topics which will interest the basic scientist, haematologist, and pathologist. The book is appropriately dedicated to the memory of Thomas F. Dougherty, but unfortunately this is printed in relatively small letters at the foot of the first page.

The first eight chapters deal with virus and haemopoietic neoplasms, with the cellular basis for immunodeficiency and the biochemistry of leucocytes, with macrophage physiology, skin window techniques, and the classification of lymphocyte subpopulations. This hors d'oeuvre is followed by a series of authoritative essays on malignant lymphoma beginning with an informative section on reactive lesions in lymph nodes. The natural history of Hodgkin's disease, mycosis fungoides, and non-Hodgkin lymphomas are superbly dealt with and provide a useful review of both fact and controversy. Classification rears its ugly head but the beginner is afforded a painless introduction to the mysteries of cleaved and non-cleaved cells.

This book has 23 authors, and the standard of writing is very uneven, ranging from the banal to excellent. The reference lists are parochial and do not reflect European contributions to the subject.

Lastly, a more informative title would be 'Lymphoma Pathology' since it is not a text on the reticuloendothelial system as ordinarily understood. Nevertheless this book deserves a position on the bookshelf of every pathologist with a special interest in neoplasms of lymphoid tissue.

A. E. STUART

Lecture Notes on Forensic Medicine, 2nd edition. By D. J. Gee. (Pp. x + 270; illustrated; £3.75.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1975.

A paperback of the same size, shape, and thickness of a who-dunnit, but costing 600% more. It is meant for students and is simple, direct, factual, and straight to the point. Every junior doctor should learn at least this much about forensic medicine, if only to avoid trouble for

himself, and it is a matter of regret that nowadays many apparently do not. Perhaps Professor Gee's book will help.

A. C. HUNT

Cytopathology in Viral Diseases. Monographs in Virology, Vol. 10. By Norman F. Cheville. (Pp. xii + 236; illustrated; Sw. Fr. 127, DM 121.) Basel: Karger. 1975.

This concise survey of the cytopathology of virus diseases of vertebrates is arranged by virus families and groups. It summarizes the diseases and pathogenetic processes with particular reference to ultrastructural changes in infected tissues. Comprehensive, well illustrated and up-to-date, its brevity inevitably disappoints when consulted for details of a particular condition, but it is a useful reference source for libraries.

N. R. GRIST

Estrogen Receptors in Human Breast Cancer. Edited by W. L. McGuire, P. O. Carbone, and E. P. Vollmer. (Pp. xiv + 284; illustrated; \$19.75.) Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company. 1975.

This book records an international workshop organized by the Breast Cancer Task Force of the National Cancer Institute held in Bethesda, Maryland in July 1974 in order to coordinate the results of research carried out for some years at various centres throughout the world on measurement of oestrogen receptor in breast cancer tissue. A major part of the symposium was devoted to comparability of techniques, and this is well covered in this book. The descriptions of the various techniques are clear and I think essential reading to anyone using or contemplating use of this test.

The second half of the book is devoted to the relationship between oestrogen binding by breast tumours and the clinical condition of the patients, and it is clear that there is a close correlation between the presence of the binding protein and response to subsequent hormone therapy, and, conversely, the absence of binding protein and the failure to respond to hormone therapy. The discussion makes it clear that the usefulness of this test as compared to clinical evaluation as an indication for hormone therapy at this time has not yet been established, and, therefore, the claim

on the fly sheet that this volume is essential reading for clinicians caring for breast cancer patients may be premature. However, to update the clinician as to the state of research in this subject, the book is highly recommended.

T. POWLES

Human Bone Marrow. By S. N. Wickramasinghe. (Pp. xiv + 456; illustrated; £16.50.) Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1975.

Most haematologists assess normal and abnormal marrow function in terms of morphology alone, and there has long been a need for a comprehensive review of the functional or 'kinetic' aspects of marrow physiology and the way in which this is disturbed in disease. This scholarly book is a largely successful attempt to fill the gap. Written in a style which can be understood by the general haematologist, it begins with a detailed consideration of cell proliferation and differentiation, then deals in turn with normal and abnormal erythropoiesis, granulopoiesis, and thrombopoiesis, and includes an excellent chapter on the microanatomy of the bone marrow, a subject often neglected in standard texts. The sections on megaloblastic and sideroblastic anaemia are especially interesting and authoritative, reflecting Dr. Wickramasinghe's own work in this field.

The bibliography is exceptionally comprehensive and includes 64 pages of references! This does tend to make the text somewhat 'glutinous' in places; for example, references are so liberally strewn throughout the chapter on 'haemopoietic stem cells' that the reader may lose the thread of the argument; a few paragraphs summarizing the author's own views on the interrelationship between ESC, CFUs, and CFUC might make this very complex subject more intelligible to the general reader.

The tables are well set out and the illustrations clear. Although many of the methods, implied or described, are outside the scope of a general haematology laboratory, it is obvious that blood disorders are better understood if considered from a functional as well as a morphological viewpoint, and this book can be strongly recommended to all practising haematologists, and particularly to the trainee.

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