Book reviews

The Hemoglobinopathies: Techniques of Identification (Clinical and Biochemical Analysis Series, Volume 6). By Titus H. J. Huisman and J. H. P. Jonxis. (Pp. v + 449; illustrated; SFr. 140.) New York: Marcel Dekker. 1977.

This book contains a very detailed description of the investigations of the haemoglobinopathies, in which the authors are acknowledged authorities and have themselves developed many of the techniques used. There is no doubt that this is a valuable reference book for those doing work in the field. The general haematologist will find it useful for the appraisal of techniques, which would be appropriate in his laboratory. I am sure that many who see patients with these diseases commonly will wish to have the book on the shelf while others will find it useful to look at a library copy occasionally. Unfortunately, most of us will be forced into the latter category by the price: SFr. 140 (£35).

E. R. HUEHNS

Clinical Immunobiology, Volume 3. Edited by F. H. Bach and R. A. Good. (Pp. xx + 442; illustrated; £17.40.) New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press. 1977.

Comprehensive Immunology, Immunology in Medicine, Medical Immunology, and Clinical Immunobiology—these are the titles of the four books of this genre published in the space of a few months which this reviewer has personally received and it is hardly likely to be an exhaustive list. Any individual or librarian contemplating the purchase of books of this sort is entitled to ask what is distinctive or indispensable about this particular one. The answer is 'very little', and *Clinical Immunobiology* Volume 3 is typical of many such volumes. The fault lies not with the contributors; there is little evidence that the editors have exerted any influence on the design or objectives of the final product. The reader might reasonably expect that a book with this title would help in the interpretation of immunological problems met in clinical practice. In this respect some of the contributions are excellent, such as the evaluation of abnormal immunoglobulin patterns by Hong, Franklin, Morell, and others. The chapter by Adkinson and Lichtenstein on the assessment of allergic

states is outstanding and perhaps the best guide to this difficult subject available. The majority of the other chapters are mediocre reviews of a variety of subjects, such as complement and autoantibodies, all of which duplicate what is already available elsewhere. Predictably, the more the chapters enter the realms of 'cellular immunology', the more tenuous is their link with clinical practice. Not that these chapters are badly written; it is the absence of any uniformity of approach which is so irritating. Some papers are pitched at a very elementary level, for example, that on rheumatoid factors, while others, for example that on cytotoxicity assays, are highly sophisticated. The minute description of techniques in some but not all chapters is completely pointless in a volume which has no pretensions to being a 'method book'. 'Good soldiers, badly led' would be a succinct comment on this book. On this reviewer's standard scale on which 'Gell, Coombs, and Lachmann' equals 100%, this work scores around 15%.

A. M. DENMAN

Biochemical Methods in Medical Genetics. By Sally Kelly (Pp. xi + 345; illustrated; \$17.50.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1977.

This is very much a technical manual for the hospital biochemistry laboratory asked to investigate the occasional specimen for evidence of a genetic disorder. The bulk of the text gives clear descriptions to United States laboratories of techniques for estimation of enzymes associated with inherited metabolic disorders; it does this well, and is to be complimented on its clear, 'lab manual' style, with references to the literature for each procedure. A good index also helps.

Of the general introduction (chapter 1) and the short notes on each disease the less said the better. They range from grossly oversimplified to inaccurate, but hopefully will not be read in any case by the technician rushed to perform the analysis. The purist would object to the use of both °F and °C to indicate temperature, and inches and millimetres to indicate length (sometimes in the same sentence!). Of more importance is the constant reference to commercial products and firms, which very much limits the book to

the American market; even so, a list of addresses of the companies mentioned would surely have been useful. It was disappointing that it was not clear which enzyme assays could be performed on cells cultured after amniocentesis. The section on haemoglobinopathies is markedly weaker than the enzyme sections; I would hate to think of the staff of a small hospital attempting to identify an abnormal haemoglobin by peptide mapping on the basis of the short notes given here.

I suppose the conclusion is that, for all its faults, at least the National Health Service in Britain renders this book largely unnecessary—regional and national centres handle most assays for rare diseases, and since they are carried out relatively frequently they are carried out properly and accurately. Would I buy it if it were not my gift for writing this? In the United States, yes, for its excellent clarity as a practical manual; here in the UK, I will use it to construct a nice practical for our students, but I doubt if it will be much used in laboratories of medical genetics.

R. WILLIAMS

The Shorter Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology, 8th Edition. Edited by J. G. Holt. (Pp. xiv + 356; illustrated; \$15.95.) Baltimore: The Williams & Wilkins Company. 1977.

The Shorter Bergey has been prepared from material in *Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology*, 8th edition, (hereafter, the standard Bergey) for 'students and laboratory workers who desire a more portable, less monetarily valuable compendium of information useful for the identification of bacteria'. It is lighter in weight and lies flat, although it is really not robust enough for frequent use at the bench. It is considerably cheaper than the standard Bergey and a remarkable amount of valuable material remains.

The sections follow the same scheme of 19 groupings of bacteria, but in the Shorter Bergey keys to families are distributed through the text and key features are highlighted—both practically helpful innovations. Descriptions of families and genera, tables of differential characteristics of species, and all the excellent photographs have been carried over. Species

descriptions, critical discussion, and some of the appendices and introductory chapters are absent, as are individual acknowledgements of the authors of the original sections. Where relevant, the many addenda and corrigenda issued as a supplement to the standard Bergey have been incorporated.

In the Shorter Bergey, the references to authorities and methods, and page references in the keys to genera, imply access to the standard Bergey, and those who purchase the cheaper volume may find some frustration in this. A clinical bacteriology laboratory will do well to rely mainly on a manual such as *Cowan and Steel's Identification of Medical Bacteria*, investing, if possible, in the standard Bergey for reference on matters of dispute and for unusual and difficult cases.

D. C. E. SPELLER

The Granulocyte: Function and Clinical Utilization, edited by T. J. Greenwalt and G. A. Jamieson. Progress in Clinical and Biological Research, Vol. 13. (Pp. xiii + 341; illustrated; \$30.) New York: Alan R. Liss. 1977.

This book is the proceedings of the American National Red Cross 8th Annual Scientific Symposium held in May 1976. It draws together the experience of the major, predominantly American, groups engaged in the study of the granulocyte and the clinical application of granulocyte transfusions. The initial sections cover, in some detail, the behaviour of both normal and abnormal granulocytes from differentiation and release from the marrow to their functions of leukotaxis, phagocytosis, and bacterial killing. After a short section bearing witness to the fact that mature granulocytes are at present extremely difficult to store for prolonged periods, the final third of the book is concerned with some aspects of collection and transfusion of normal granulocytes. All the contributors seem convinced of the value of such transfusions, and the importance of this section lies not so much in the answers given as in the fact that the right questions are being asked. These include the concern with improving collection methods, particularly filtration leukapheresis which at present results in significant granulocyte damage. In addition, it is important to know how to select those patients from whom granulocyte transfusion is most likely to

justify the expense and labour involved in their collection and what influence, if any, testing for histocompatibility and leucocyte antibodies has on the clinical effectiveness of these cells. In this section I found a contribution on neutrophil antigens by Lalezari particularly interesting.

A single volume dealing, as this does, with our current understanding of the granulocyte from both experimental and clinical viewpoints is timely. It suffers from the inevitable problems of publishing a conference proceedings in that there is some duplication of information while other aspects are inadequately covered. Parts of it make for rather heavy reading, and the method of division according to subject is not entirely logical. However, the speed of publication is such that it will not be too outdated yet, and it could be useful for those interested in granulocytes wanting information on work outside their own immediate field. There may, however, be cheaper ways of obtaining the same information.

J. A. RUSSELL

Recent Advances in Haematology No. 2. Edited by A. V. Hoffbrand, M. C. Brain, and J. Hirsh. (Pp. xii + 478; illustrated; £16.00.) Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1977.

This substantially enlarged second edition of the successful *Recent Advances in Haematology* now has three editors and 35 contributors. It comprises a high-powered review of major advances in haematology since the first edition appeared in 1971. The topics selected include eight chapters on oncology, six on haemostasis, and four on the red cell; additional chapters deal with leucocytes, stem cells, and bone marrow transplantation.

The book is an important source of reference for the established haematologist and senior trainee. The editors and contributors have an international reputation and deal with their areas of specialist interest to a high and uniform standard of presentation. The text is packed with information within a very efficient layout, and there is an extensive bibliography. Several of the chapters are particularly useful in bringing together information which has not previously been available in review form.

Considerable previous knowledge and a lot of concentration are required to gain maximum benefit from the text; the effort

is worthwhile, however, because of the importance of the topics presented and the calibre of the contributors.

J. STUART

Basic Techniques in Diagnostic Histopathology. By Alexander Kennedy. (Pp. x + 117; illustrated; £3.50.) Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1977.

This is not another histological 'cook book'. It is concerned with histopathology specimens before the cutting and staining stages—documentation, recording of gross findings, and the best methods for fixation and selection of tissue blocks for all types of microscopical examination. The cut-up of surgical specimens is described in some detail, and although most techniques are well accepted, the author admits that not all will be appropriate to every laboratory. These laboratory practices are inherited by junior technicians and trainee pathologists from their teachers by word of mouth, but as laboratory staffs have grown, communication has become more difficult, and there is a real need for this book. If every embryo technician and pathologist reads this book in the first week of conception, it will avoid waste of time and tissue and will prevent laboratory errors. A strongly recommended evening's reading.

R. A. B. DRURY

Blood Group Serology. Theory, Techniques, Practical Applications, 5th edition. By Kathleen E. Boorman, Barbara E. Dodd, and P. J. Lincoln. (Pp. 495; illustrated; £12.00.) Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1977.

The fifth edition of 'Boorman and Dodd' has acquired a third author, Dr P. J. Lincoln, and has dropped its former title 'An Introduction to Blood Group Serology'; rightly so, this is no introduction. It provides more than sufficient information, particularly regarding serological techniques, for any technician or science graduate working in a blood transfusion laboratory, or any pathology trainee studying for the final of the MRCPATH in haematology and blood transfusion. After a somewhat shaky beginning the authors describe, in welcome detail, techniques they have found reliable in a lifetime of experience in this field. It is not surprising that the forensic aspects of blood group work are particularly authoritative, but so is the chapter on