

**Hemopoietic Dysplasias (Preleukemic States).** Edited by M. Bessis and G. Brecher. (Pp. 359; 94 figures; DM48, \$22.10.) Berlin: Heidelberg: New York: Springer-Verlag. 1977.

The main title 'Hemopoietic Dysplasias' was the consensus term finally agreed by the participants to a conference on 'Pre-leukaemic States', which is the subtitle. Although the conference was held in 1975 and the proceedings have been published as Volume 2 Nos. 1-2 of *Blood Cells*, it is nevertheless helpful to have this re-edition because the subject is one of great theoretical importance. To contemplate the pathology of sideroblastic anaemia, marrow hypoplasia, paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria, indeed all those conditions which may precede overt leukaemia, forces us to conceive how the haemopoietic system functions, how successive stages of proliferation and differentiation are controlled, and how break-downs may occur.

The speakers deal expertly with the subject from many aspects—clinical, morphological, experimental, theoretical, and so forth—and their discussions are illuminating. If there is one criticism it is the absence of a cytogeneticist since the chromosomal data receive adequate attention only in the section on radiation leukaemogenesis. The distinction between polyclonal and monoclonal proliferations might have been made and the evidence for progression more clearly demonstrated. There are also errors in the editing: on page 349, for example, there is a reference to 'myeloid dysphasia' and it is almost appropriate! But, all in all, for haematologists and oncologists this is a valuable and thought-provoking book.

H. E. M. KAY

**Pathology in Gynecology and Obstetrics.** 2nd edition. By Claude Gompel and Steven G. Silverberg. (Pp. xi + 592; illustrated; £31.60.) Philadelphia and Toronto: Lippincott. 1977.

The revised edition of Gompel and Silverberg's book covers most aspects of gynaecological and obstetrical pathology and includes chapters on the sexual maldevelopment syndromes and cytogenetics. In addition, there is a well-illustrated section on the pathology of the breast. In some ways one might regard this book as over-ambitious as its very comprehensiveness has necessitated only brief reference to some less well known, but

nonetheless important lesions. Any shortcomings in this respect are mitigated by the extensive and well set out bibliographies at the end of each chapter. There are liberal and, in the main, good photographic illustrations and line drawings; some of the electron micrographs are, however, of questionable value. Overall, the content is up to date and authoritative, embodying opinion from both American and European sources. It represents an important contribution to the knowledge and understanding of this branch of histopathology.

J. O. W. BEILBY

**Medical Immunology.** By M. S. Thaler, R. D. Klausner, and H. J. Cohen. (Pp. xvi + 480; illustrated; £13.60.) Philadelphia and Toronto: Lippincott. 1977. (Distributed in Great Britain by Blackwell Scientific Publications.)

This textbook of immunology is designed primarily for medical students and for this purpose it has several advantages. The book is lucidly and agreeably written, flowing with a style and verve which can only be achieved when a book is produced by a single or a very limited number of authors. The diagrams are outstanding, thereby removing much of the philosophical contention which commonly obfuscates books of this kind. The illustrations of complement activation, for example, are superb. Above all, the format of the text emphasises that immunology, like other medical sciences, really does have a rational molecular basis. The authors also stick to their declared intention of basing their arguments on observations drawn from human physiology and disease. Thus the section on immunosuppression avoids many of the absurdities which appear in contributions on this subject from non-medical scientists. Moreover, with the needs of students in mind, this beautifully produced book is low-priced. The book's main failing is paradoxically the author's concern to include the most recent developments. The brief comet of 'suppressor T cells' in hypogammaglobulinaemia has already disappeared from the immunological firmament and critical counsel will be needed if youthful readers are to distinguish facts from speculation. So, too, will be the guidance of other grey-beards when immunologists invade clinical preserves; not surprisingly, there is no reference to the statement that '20 to 60 per cent of patients with longstanding

rheumatoid arthritis have detectable amyloid deposits'. On balance, however, the authors have written something which this reviewer had by now assumed was impossible, a textbook on immunology with individual qualities as well as appeal.

A. M. DENMANN

**Anaerobic Bacteriology: Clinical and Laboratory Practice.** 3rd edition. By Trevor Willis. (Pp. x + 360; illustrated; £10.00.) London: Butterworths. 1977.

The 3rd edition of this book contains much useful information about non-sporing anaerobes, which was lacking in previous editions. The chapter on the methods of growing anaerobes has a valuable section on the choice of anaerobic jars and the best ways of using them. Numerous helpful references are included in each chapter.

Emphasis is made throughout on the methods developed by the author at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital. However, it is likely that some passages will cause controversy: for example, it is suggested that the multiple cultural methods used for blood culture are not routinely necessary, and it is also claimed that there is usually little difficulty in interpreting anaerobic plate cultures of sputum when a purulent fleck is selected.

Dr Trevor Willis is an acknowledged world authority on clostridia, and his chapters on this subject are excellent.

Antibiotics are frequently mentioned, but a separate chapter including further data on the chemotherapy of anaerobic infections might have been helpful.

This book provides a readable, comprehensive, and modern text on anaerobic infections. It is recommended to all clinical microbiologists.

D. C. SHANSON

**CRC Handbook Series in Clinical Laboratory Science. Section D: Blood Banking.** Volume 1. Editor-in-Chief: David Seligson, Section Editors: Tibor Greenwalt, Edwin A. Steane. (Pp. xvii + 598; illustrated; £55.20.) Cleveland: CRC Press. 1977. (Distributed in Great Britain by Blackwell Scientific Publications.)

To British readers, at least, the title of this 600-page 'handbook' is misleading. After an opening section on the chemistry, structure, and function of the red cell, it launches into detailed accounts of the blood groups, the predominant emphasis