typing to be considered as a suitable diagnostic tool even if the scarce reagents and resources were available. This problem is dealt with most lucidly by Brewerton and Albert in the section on rheumatology.

The book concludes with a series of thoughtful essays on possible mechanisms and the long-term value expected to be derived from such studies. The prospects for understanding precise disease mechanisms are summarised by McDevitt, who has contributed so much to the subject by his elucidation of many features of the mouse MHC and the existence of specific immune response genes.

This is a forward-looking book, which summarises existing knowledge and suggests stimulating approaches to unsolved problems. It may lack depth in some sections, because of the need to provide so much data in a reasonable size of format. Some dogma is questioned, some concepts are ignored, but in a new, rapidly advancing field this book provides an acceptable compromise. The indexing system is unusual and not entirely satisfactory: specific topics are listed in the contents section, and no final index is provided. In view of the complexity of the material, one might forgive the editors for not following usual practice, and *HLA and Disease* is otherwise highly recommended.

A second publication devoted to HLA associations deals with a more restricted field of study, and is entitled *HLA and Malignancy*. This is a much less satisfactory book and suffers from many of the failings of 'edited proceedings', including typographical errors, incorrect nomenclature, and a disjointed text. It was a difficult subject to focus on, because malignancy is the one major area where expectations of an HLA association (raised by the positive findings with H-2 in the experimental inbred mouse) have not yet been realised in the study of human malignant disease. This volume, based on the proceedings of a symposium held at Roswell Park Memorial Institute, does not leave one with any real sense of conviction in the demonstration of direct, significant association between HLA antigens and most types of malignant diseases. This is sad, because the initiating studies on HLA and disease were made in Hodgkin's lymphoma by Amiel in the days when HLA typing was in its infancy. Few, if any, of the recognised associations between HLA and human malignant disease are of the

order of magnitude of those described for non-malignant disease. The commonest malignancies still seem to have no strong associations; those that do exist are for diseases like nasopharyngeal carcinoma, Hodgkin's disease, and, possibly, some forms of leukaemia. What is the current state of the art?

This book does not supply the answer nor does it reduce the sense of frustration at not being able to define a connection between histocompatibility antigens and malignant disease in man, comparable to the association so clearly distinguished in the mouse leukaemias. The introductory sections are probably too condensed for the general reader, attempting to compress a series of complex serological and genetic matters into a few pages. A further section is devoted to work in the leukaemias, where a glimmer of light may have been cast by the observation that survival, not susceptibility, is the important phenomenon—an observation which was reported as long ago as 1971 for Hodgkin's disease. The picture in the leukaemias is confused by the serological problems of HLA typing leukaemic cells, and the papers in this section are a mixed bag of technical reports and association studies, which might have been better separated and identified as representing quite different facets of the problem.

The section on 'Selected solid tumor and other neoplasias' (what a deal of confused thinking is buried in that title!) is initiated by what is probably one of the most useful chapters of this book. This is a critical view of the present (1976) situation by the pioneer of HLA, Jean Dausset, who contributes a thoughtful and provocative essay, which might well have been the keynote of the whole presentation rather than being hidden away in an otherwise undistinguished section. The book is completed by a series of unconnected papers, which have been capriciously grouped together as 'Transplantation antigens and malignancy', although at least two of them, on Hodgkin's disease, would have been happier in the preceding section. This strange juxtaposition of material in the last section, where pure biochemistry is arranged cheek by jowl with a study of HLA in spontaneous retinoblastoma, is a failing of the book as a whole. Arrangement of a text is a major part of the editorial task in presenting any symposium proceedings: *HLA and Malignancy* fails badly on that score, with an unhappy mixture that does not present a coherent

view of the subject and is certainly not easy reading for those who are not already experts in the field of HLA. The problem of finding the elusive association between HLA and malignancy will not be solved using this book as a guide. It does include a good deal of information but skill is needed to dissect it out of the text. What is particularly lacking, except in Professor Dausset's contribution, is an evaluation of the possible reasons why this aspect of HLA association is still in such an unsatisfactory state, and a long, cool look at the possibilities for future, productive studies. Anyone who needs help regarding what kind of studies are likely to be useful will have to work hard to extract it from this book.

HEATHER DICK

Pathology of the Spinal Cord, 2nd edition. By J. Trevor Hughes. (Pp. xii + 257; illustrated; £7.50.) London: Lloyd-Luke (Medical Books) Ltd. 1978.

It is 11 years since the first edition of this book was published. Since then there have been many significant developments and advances in the neurological sciences, changes that are reflected in this revised edition.

The text has been considerably enlarged with the addition of a separate chapter on the neuronal system degenerations. Most of the other chapters deal with the major categories of developmental and acquired diseases that affect the spinal cord and the structures of the spinal canal. The last chapter gives details of how the spinal cord is examined post mortem in Oxford. Some 14 new illustrations have been added, and an updated list of references is appended to each chapter.

In many respects this book is a synopsis of neuropathology but with particular emphasis on those conditions that affect the spinal cord. Commonly encountered diseases are described fully, and the rarer conditions briefly. It is perhaps surprising that the opportunity has not been taken to give a more detailed account of the pathophysiology of diseases of the autonomic nervous system that affect the spinal cord, and of trauma, since recent experimental work (blood flow, electrophysiology, etc) has greatly added to the knowledge and understanding of these conditions. Nevertheless this book gives a useful account of the subject and is recommended to neurologists, neurosurgeons, clinicians with a particular interest in the pathology

of the spinal cord, and pathologists in training.

D. I. GRAHAM

Surgical Pathology of the Uterus. By S. G. Silverberg. (Pp. xi + 130; illustrated; £10.50.) New York: John Wiley and Sons. 1977.

This book describes how a pathologist should approach uterine specimens, the histological appearances he will encounter, and how he should summarise his findings as a guide for the clinician. The introductory chapter stresses that the most important single principle of surgical pathology is respect for the specimen, which 'mirrors the respect of the pathologist for both the clinician and the patient, without which the pathologist can hardly be said to be engaged in the practice of medicine'. Subsequent chapters discuss endometrial biopsy for infertility, curettage for abnormal vaginal bleeding, hysterectomy for benign and malignant disease, cervical biopsy especially in the context of the follow-up of abnormal cytology, the diagnosis of pregnancy and trophoblastic disease, and cervical and vaginal specimens from DES-exposed females.

The author, who has considerable experience in this field, has produced a lucid text with well argued opinions. Thus he prefers to report on endometrial biopsies in terms of the phase of the cycle rather than the presumptive date. In endometrial hyperplasia he stresses the importance of providing the clinician with a clear understanding of the severity and extent of the lesion, without which the uterus is too often removed. Silverberg is well known for his lack of enthusiasm for mitosis counting when assessing the malignancy of uterine tumours. 'It is obvious', he says 'that tumours carry neither micrometers nor calculators'.

Applications of the principles described in this book would not only improve the practice of gynaecological pathology but, more importantly, of gynaecology itself.

F. A. LANGLEY

Principles of Surgical Oncology. Edited by R. W. Raven. (Pp. x + 509; illustrated; \$45.00.) New York and London: Plenum Press. 1977.

With the recent increasing interest in oncology, the establishment of new training programmes, and numerous discussions for including surgical oncology, there is a need to have relevant up-to-date texts for the established and in-training oncologist. The present book attempts to provide a scientific basis for surgical oncology. The chapters are protean, ranging from aspects of fundamental science, through cancer aetiology and epidemiology, and laboratory medicine to practical management of the tumour-bearing patient.

This book, unfortunately, is disappointing, failing to achieve its aims. There is a lack of detail in some sections, over-emphasis on others, and regrettably too much unsound data for a text of this size. The difficulty of providing a useful, scientific text on oncology as a whole is regrettably illustrated by this book.

A. MUNRO NEVILLE

Blood Smears Reinterpreted. By Marcel Bessis. (Translated from the French by G. Brecher.) (Pp. xvi + 270; 342 figures—some in colour; cloth DM 96; \$42.30.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1977.

This book by Marcel Bessis has been translated from the French original by George Brecher and, according to the Preface, it was hotly debated and somewhat amended in the process. The end result, however, is an attractively presented and eminently readable monograph on the cell biology of blood and marrow.

Bessis explains in detail how the morphological appearances in stained films arise, and he has also included illustrations of phase contrast and scanning electron microscopy as well as diagrams of transmission electron micrographs. The chapter on plasma cells best illustrates how he relates structure to function; most haematologists know, for example, why the cytoplasm of a plasma cell stains dark blue but how many could explain exactly why the nucleus is eccentric or why the cytoplasm occasionally flames?

The author warns us that his book is not comprehensive yet it really is rather

complete given that all the descriptions and illustrations occupy a total of only 238 pages. There are chapters on the erythrocytic, granulocytic, lymphocytic, plasmocytic, monohistiocytic, mastocytic, and thrombocytic series as well as on pathological red cells and the leukaemias. The final chapter describes techniques for both light and electron microscopy.

I found very few things to criticise. The chapter on the general anatomy and physiology of blood cells was rather divorced from the remainder of the book and contained a number of errors, such as the statement that the cell membrane is 800 nm thick. The cost of the book also seemed rather high at £25.92 but this criticism can be levelled to some extent at almost any other publication. I hope that every haematology department can afford to buy a copy.

J. M. ENGLAND

Crohn's Disease. By B. N. Brooke, D. A. Cave, J. F. Curry, and D. W. King. (Pp. x + 113; illustrated; £9.75.) London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Limited. 1977.

This is a short and enjoyable book which, although of no practical value to diagnostic pathologists, provides excellent background knowledge and is a good source of references. One-third of the book covers aetiology, epidemiology, and genetics, pooling together widely scattered knowledge. Many interesting theories are put forward, for example, that Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are caused by similar agents, but the divergent morphology results from different immunological handling as one ascends the vertebrate animal kingdom. The chapter on diagnosis is a helpful résumé of the key features of the diseases in the differential, and a chapter on the acute complications of Crohn's disease emphasises two important points: firstly, the occurrence of 'acute disintegrative colitis' (toxic megacolon) and, secondly, 'acute terminal ileitis', only 10-12% of which persist as Crohn's disease.

This book is not intended for those who only look down a microscope; it is an enjoyable way to appreciate the current knowledge on Crohn's disease.

A. B. PRICE