A new chapter has been added on the serum level monitoring of therapeutic drugs, and this includes not only the commonly monitored compounds such as the anticonvulsants, lithium and digoxin, but also those compounds falling into the general category of poisoning such as lead, the barbitalates and salicylates, and alcohol. Other chapters have been extensively rewritten, and new tests have been added in many of these areas of revision.

The book is concise and easy to read but is probably too 'all-embracing' for the current trends in pathology in Great Britain. A brief look at the table of contents indicates that chemical pathology, endocrinology, and medical microbiology are all extensively discussed. There are also a number of topics, which normally do not fall within the province of a pathology laboratory, such as ultrasound examination and computerised axial tomography.

This is an admirable book for those pathologists who, because of their geographical situation, or for other reasons, are responsible for more than one discipline; it will be a valuable addition to their reference library. For specialist pathologists, however, the tendency will be for them to acquire alternative books devoted solely to their own disciplines.

G. W. PENNINGTON


First sight of this unconventional book aroused curiosity, browsing led to doubts and closer examination to disappointment. Curiosity stemmed from the format: an extensive series of illustrated case studies, each of which is followed by a group of multiple-choice questions, followed in turn by a general discussion and selected references. The 60 case studies are drawn from the alimentary system, urinary tract, reproductive system, lymphoreticular and haemopoietic systems, vascular lesions, and the musculoskeletal system, and conclude with a small miscellaneous group. The authors' aims are to challenge what they pessimistically describe as 'residual' knowledge and to prime the reader for detailed discussions. It is an interesting attempt but falls short on several counts: the answers to these problem-solving exercises are commonly self-evident from the first few words of the clinical history; many of the multiple-choice questions are poorly constructed; although a key to the answers is provided, a fair number of controversial points raised by the questions are not covered in the text; and the photomicrographs are generally poor—some no more than an uninformative blur.

I suspect that reactions to the novel format will vary; it certainly did among some colleagues in training. Some might find it helpful, while others would prefer a more conventional approach. The authors' hope is to provide 'that elusive formula which captures and sustains the reader's interest'; they will not be unique if they are only partly successful.

Its value may perhaps be found at the end of the day—in place of the crossword puzzle when one is not prepared for the discipline of formal study. It will surely reveal gaps in knowledge, and the information it provides is authoritative and up to date.

H. M. CAMERON


The fourth edition of McDonald's Atlas of Haematology is about half as big again as the previous edition. Comparison of the two shows where welcome additions have been made. There are now some good hairy cells and some myeloma cells with prominent nuclei, also a promyelocyte leukaemia, but I hope this will be more densely granular in the next edition and that follicular lymphoma cells will be more uniformly sized with some notched nuclei. The main addition is a section on electron microscopy, which on the whole is excellent although some definition appears to be lost in places—the RER of the plasma cell, for example.

The section on SEM will need to be revised (see below) but, for most purposes, this maintains the high standard previously set and gives something extra.

We have already come far from the neat spheroidal concept of cells, and in Polliaick's Atlas of Scanning Electron Microscopy one can appreciate the surface irregularities of processes, ridges, ruffles, or villi and the pockmarks of craters and blebs. The smooth cell is usually an artefact of fixation although some unstimulated T-cells may have only a few projections. There is much to be admired here; the point-to-point contacts of rosetting lymphocytes, the effect of transforming mitogens, bleb-covered myeloma cells, and, of course, leukemic 'hair cells'. The latter are actually almost the only non-hairy ones, the surface being mostly ridges and ruffles (of course, one should have guessed). This is a book of revelations but, as the author is careful to point out, SEM cannot help much in the diagnosis of leucocyte disorders.

The latest volume in Clinics in Haematology returns after an interval of six years to Acute Leukaemia, a subject which is thus, for the moment at least, brought up to date. An imposing list of contributors has reviewed the various aspects of the disease, omitting epidemiology, virology, and leukaemogenesis. Treatment matters predominate and give further encouragement and hope of success, yet so many questions are entirely open. Are there leukaemia-specific antigens or not? Does immunotherapy have any role to play and, if so, by what mechanism? Are cytokinetics critical to drug strategy? Here one must admire the honesty of the authors from the Memorial Hospital, whose own cytokine-based regimes have been excellent yet who admit that equally good results can be obtained by reversing the order in drug-sequences. A chapter on chromosomes points the way to a better understanding of the diversity of AML and one on bone marrow transplantation indicates what may be the most hopeful long-term treatment of that disease. All in all, a useful guide for the next two to three years in acute leukaemia.

H. E. M. KAY


For a book with 25 contributors this is a remarkably readable and homo-
Semen volume. Almost all the subjects are unusual and topical, including such exotica as Karate injuries and the hazards of the 'off-shore scene'. As might be expected from a work edited by Professor Mason, transport accidents are particularly well covered, and every pathologist involved in coroner's practice will find much of interest here. For the specialist forensic pathologist there are also fascinating tit-bits, such as the patterns of robbery with violence in Texas. Altogether a well written, original, and scholarly book which does credit to forensic pathology.

A. C. HUNT


This collection of papers from the symposium organised by the British Society for Cell Biology, held in Manchester in 1977, aims at reviewing the control of cell proliferation and differentiation.

Although such a large subject cannot be fully covered in a book this size, the selection of topics and their manner of presentation provide a surprisingly good view of the many problems involved. This has been achieved largely by concentrating on mammalian cells with excursions into lower organisms where this gives a useful different perspective. The first two papers are the most theoretical, dealing with rather different views of the underlying mechanism of differentiation. The first concentrates on the relationships of differentiation to the cell cycle, while the second emphasises the importance of spatial relationships between cells within a tissue. These consider essentially different aspects of the same problem rather than being antagonistic theories. Subsequent papers cover a range of topics including: development of the eye, cell kinetics of epithelial tissue, and a strong emphasis on haematological problems including the role of inhibitors and stimulators and the effect of viral agents, and a particularly good paper on lymphocytes. A single paper on plant root stem cells and one on insects provide a reminder that other organisms can provide useful information.

Any attempt at a concise review inevitably involves striking some sort of balance between the extent to which one can cover the subject and the degree to which one demonstrates how and with what certainty particular conclusions are reached. Depending on one's knowledge of the topic, there will be considerable difference of opinion as to whether a particular author has concentrated too much on the wood or the trees.

Overall this book provides a useful coverage of many of the problems involved in understanding the very difficult but important problem of control of cell proliferation and cell differentiation.

N. M. BLACKETT


This is the hardcover edition of the December 1977 issue (Volume IX, No. 4) of the quarterly journal Transplantation Proceedings, an official publication of the Transplantation Society. In includes the papers presented at the third annual meeting of the American Association for Clinical Histocompatibility Testing (AACT) held in April 1977 in New Orleans. The volume is not a collection of review articles, although it does include one or two short 'overviews' of the histocompatibility scene. It reflects the current preoccupations of workers in human histocompatibility, i.e., better antigen definition, new antigen systems, new allelic products, matching for clinical transplantation, the effect of clinical fusion on renal graft survival, and the exciting new topic of HLA and disease association.

This is not a book for the newcomer to HLA, it is a book for the initiate. The few short review articles (by Kissmeyer-Nielsen and Kristensen, Zinkernagel and Grumet) serve only to summarise, in a very condensed fashion, the state of the art in spring 1977. The remaining contributions are short, synoptic presentations of individual observations. The topics covered are grouped into general areas of interest and include some papers on techniques for the detection of HLA antigens as well as original findings. Because this volume is really a collection of 'short papers' it lacks balance, and some topics are dealt with in a fragmentary fashion. Yet there is some gold in the sand, for example, a good summary of the role of HLA antigen matching in renal and corneal graft rejection by Kissmeyer-Nielsen and Kristensen, and an appraisal of the relevance of granulocyte-specific antigens to neonatal and acquired thrombocytopenia. Indeed, the section on granulocyte antibodies is, in my opinion, the most original in the book, and even if it has been outdated by other recent publications dealing exclusively with this topic.

The section on HLA and disease suffers equally from having been overtaken by events. There is a good, if condensed, general introduction to the biological role of the MHC by Zinkernagel, followed by an introduction to some of the problems which beset studies on HLA alleles by Carpinter. The remainder of this section includes some short papers reporting HLA and disease associations, largely reflecting the current (1977) interests of some of the North American HLA workers.

The introductory segment of the book on 'Serologically defined antigens of the major histocompatibility complex' makes an interesting historical reading but was clearly written and presented before the 7th International HLA Workshop, held in Oxford in September 1977. At this workshop the B-lymphocyte alloantigens were defined, named, and even counted, which is a long way ahead of the tentative findings presented here to AACT.

This volume—and perhaps its successors, unless a more rapid method of publication is adopted—suffers from the problems inherent in publishing unrelated articles linked only by a general theme, dealing with a subject undergoing a rapid increase in available data. Clinical histocompatibility testing and its development do not lend themselves to this form of turgid presentation, which inevitably lags too far behind the real state of the art.

HEATHER M. DICK