

ceedings of which are published as Annual Reviews in their Birth Defects, Original Article Series. This volume covers that part of the 1981 conference devoted to teratogenesis, prenatal diagnosis, and miscellaneous topics headed perinatology. The contributions are overwhelmingly North American and Mexican and hence, with one exception, ignore the considerable European experience. They are mostly well written, making their points clearly and briefly, apart from the dreadful jargon of the final paper on the transport of mothers and babies.

There are 11 papers on teratogenesis ranging from experimental studies to clinical reports on maternal smoking, alcoholism, diabetes, and drug therapy. Ten contributions on prenatal diagnosis include discussions of screening and reports on the diagnosis of skeletal defects, chromosomal disorders, and a case of infantile polycystic kidney. They confirm the increasing use of ultrasound for prenatal diagnosis.

In conclusion, this book is a worthwhile investment for the library of at least a paediatric or clinical genetic unit, and perhaps the interested radiologist or pathologist.

M d'A CRAWFURD

**Cell Kinetics and Cancer Therapy.** Juliana Denekamp. (Pp 162; illustrated; \$24.75.) Charles C Thomas. 1982.

Although aimed at "filling the gap between specialist cell kineticists and radiotherapists and tumour biologists" this book, while not being an in-depth treatise on kinetics, makes assumptions only the kineticist can accept. Equations are introduced without explanation, eg  $\lambda$  on p 11 is never defined. On the other side it tends to be patronising, eg the description of autoradiography reads like a script for *Listen with Mother*. When the author's excitement moved me to note a reference—it wasn't listed. In fact the book's frequent, rather sloppy, features are its hallmark. References are missing. Graphs are inconsistently presented with radiation dose quoted alternately in rads and Grays. One section headed "Birth Rate" says nothing about this subject.

Presentation is good, errors are few, and there is a good distribution of references up to the present. Like other books on cell kinetics and therapy, this book does a good job of highlighting the many pitfalls and problems in marrying the two disciplines. It is perhaps significant that the concluding chapter on growing points is the most

encouraging; unfortunately it draws little on cell kinetics.

BI LORD

**Medical Microbiology.** Ed Samuel Baron. (Pp 952; illustrated; £16.95.) Addison-Wesley Publishers Limited. 1982.

This multi-authored textbook is set out along traditional lines. There is an initial section of 100 pages covering the general aspects of immunology (not only related to infection) followed by the bulk of the text which is composed of chapters on each of the medically important bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites, and finally a very short section on microbiology of organ systems. The initial chapters on each group of organisms cover briefly the structure, classification, cultivation, pathogenesis, genetics, and host defences of bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites respectively. The individual chapters are quite uneven. Those which consider each organism in turn on the whole succeed but those which endeavour to consider the whole genus (for example *Staphylococcus* and *Streptococcus*) have the reader very confused. In the Preface, the editor acknowledges that no textbook can meet all needs and notes that the text was designed to offer optimal assistance to the student studying the principles of microbiology. For students in the United Kingdom this object is not fulfilled. For medical students there is insufficient coverage of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease caused by microorganisms, and for non-medical students of medical microbiology there is insufficient discription of the organisms.

ELIZABETH SHAW

**Diagnostic Electron Microscopy.** Jan Vincents Johannessen. (Pp 210; illustrated; \$34.50) Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. 1982.

The idea of having an electron micrograph "slide seminar" as a sort of programmed learning text is a good one. This book consists of a series of histopathological cases presented so that the reader can participate actively in the learning process by attempting to identify subcellular structures and interpret ultrastructural appearances for himself and then compare his answers with those given on the next page.

Unfortunately the good intentions do not work out too well in practice. Many of the structures labelled are too small or not

clearly enough visible in the published prints to be identifiable by the novice electron microscopist and often the questions asked are not specifically answered in the text. Nevertheless those concerned with training juniors in diagnostic electron microscopy may find it a useful tool although being presented with first the ultrastructure and then the light microscopy may be a trifle disconcerting and not desirable in the working situation.

JULIE CROW

**Colorectal Cancer.** Recent Results in Cancer Research. Vol 83. Ed W Duncan. (Pp 156; illustrated; DM 92/US \$40.90.) Springer. 1982.

These are the collected papers of the 3rd Symposium on Clinical Oncology organised by the Royal College of Radiologists. There are 12 contributions covering aspects of the aetiology, histopathology, diagnosis, and treatment of colorectal cancer. The scientific standard is high and this book adequately satisfies the needs of anyone requiring an easily accessible and concise account of the present position of colorectal cancer research. Apart from the more scientific contributions, pathologists could read with advantage the clinical sections on early diagnosis and surgical treatment in particular, for in these can be seen how much our colleagues depend on the contribution made by the surgical pathologist. The complex subject of Cell Kinetics is distilled into a thoroughly readable and digestible form, but the sections on the Epidemiology of Colorectal Cancer are perhaps the least inspiring in what is otherwise a very useful monograph.

BC MORSON

**Skeletal Muscle Pathology.** Ed Frank L Mastaglia and Sir John Walton. (Pp 648; illustrated; £45.) Churchill Livingstone. 1982.

Skeletal muscle pathology is a field which has advanced rapidly in recent years mainly because it is particularly dependent on new techniques. The usual standard paraffin sections are often of limited value, which has served to give muscle biopsy a bad name among some neurologists. Things are now changing and most clinicians are well aware of the help the pathologist can give.

This is one of the first large texts to bring together satisfactorily skeletal muscle pathology at light, histochemical,