LEUKAEMIA

Leukaemia continues to be an interesting study to physicians, pathologists and experimentalists and from time to time books on the subject appear. Some are good, some are bad, but the majority of them are usually informative. This present textbook is unusual and therefore is bound to be stimulating. The frontispiece shows the bone marrow in erythraemic myelosis. This is, perhaps, unconventional as it is essentially a red cell disorder, but as the condition behaves clinically like a leukaemia it is not wholly out of place. In the first few chapters of the book the historical background of leukaemia is sketched, followed by the definition of several terms and by a classification of the leukaemias. Most of the views expressed in these chapters may be regarded as orthodox.

The prevalence and incidence of leukaemia is outlined in the next chapter. This is based on a comprehensive survey of the literature. The aetiology of leukaemia is the subject of another chapter. Although the number of references is almost 200, no really important new factor emerges. The pathology of the leukaemic cell makes up the next part of the book and is well reviewed, and so is the special pathology and symptomatology which stresses how the skeletal system is affected. The clinical features of the various types of leukaemia and their special features are described and illustrated by mostly very good photomicrographs. Some special features of myelomatosis are recorded, and the differential diagnosis of leukaemia and allied conditions as well as the laboratory diagnosis is discussed. A particularly valuable chapter is the one on the myeloproliferative disorders although this reviewer does not quite see eye to eye with the authors on some of the views expressed here. The prognosis and treatment of leukaemia is described. It is little more encouraging than it has been during the last few years.

This book is well produced throughout, well thought out and well set out. Only the future can reveal what is likely to happen in research in leukaemia and it will be interesting to see what new chemical and physical factors may be brought to bear on these interesting and difficult problems.

HAEMATOLOGY

The British Medical Bulletin from time to time publishes special numbers. This one is devoted to Haematology. It has an introduction by Professor L. J. Witts. Dr. S. T. Callender reviews concisely the problems of iron absorption. The role of radioactive vitamin B₁₂ in the study of blood diseases is outlined by Dr. D. L. Mollison and the role of folic acid by Dr. R. H. Girdwood. The biosynthesis of haemoglobin is described by Professor C. Rimington, the chemistry of the abnormal human haemoglobins by Dr. V. M. Ingram and the foetal haemoglobin by Drs. J. C. White and G. H. Beaven. Variations in human haemoglobin synthesis and factors governing their inheritance are discussed by Dr. H. Lehmann. Culture of bone-marrow cells in vitro is briefly outlined by Dr. L. J. Lajtha, who has had a very long experience in this field. The life-history of lymphocytes is sketched by Dr. J. L. Gowans. Red-cell structure and metabolism in haemolytic anaemia is discussed by Dr. T. A. J. Pranker, the measurement of survival and destruction of red cells in haemolytic syndromes by Dr. P. L. Mollison and the acquired haemolytic anaemias by Professor J. V. Dacie. The epidemiology of human leukaemia is discussed by Dr. Alice M. Stewart and Dr. D. Hewitt and the treatment of the chronic leukaemias by Dr. D. A. G. Galton. The number also contains some reviews of books on haematology and notes on the contributors who are all well known experts in their own fields.

This number will be a necessity for everyone interested in haematology.

HEREDITY OF THE BLOOD GROUPS

The senior author of this book has been associated with the work on blood groups for very many years and as is well known, has been associated with Landsteiner for a long time.
After a brief introduction, the various types of blood groups are described which for many people will be rather formidable reading. There are so many systems of blood groups known now that it is not surprising that this comparatively small book of 150 pages contains 265 references to the literature. The anthropological and the medico-legal aspects of blood grouping are briefly mentioned.

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**HAEMATOLOGISCHER ATLAS**


This new atlas of haematology published in Berlin has beautifully reproduced colour photomicrographs and some photographs in black and white, including some phase contrast pictures. The various cell systems are described and illustrated in the orthodox manner and the practical laboratory techniques for haematological studies are fully described. This well produced book does real credit to author, publisher and printer.

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**ANATOMY OF THE HUMAN BODY**


It has been the authors' intention to reduce the burden of the student of anatomy and to achieve this they aimed to shorten the text to about half the length found in standard texts. The shortening was to be achieved by brevity and the omission of repetition and by the very extensive use of illustrations in the belief that 'a little picture is worth a million words.' Much repetition has indeed been avoided and the book is little less than half the length of Gray's 'Anatomy.'

It is doubtful, however, if the Chinese proverb quoted was intended to apply to little pictures accompanied by some hundreds of descriptive words and it is a general criticism of the book that many of its illustrations are too extensively labelled. This applies especially in the section dealing with the nervous system. The diagram illustrating the nervous control of the pupil is itself necessarily complex and it is accompanied by captions totalling rather more than 600 words; many of these captions are themselves repetition of what has already appeared in the text. The figure illustrating the autonomic nervous supply of glands in the head rivals a London Transport map in complexity and, like others dealing with the autonomic system, is on too small a scale to allow easy understanding or even recognition of its parts. It is unlikely that such figures as these will lighten any student's burden, although careful study of them, if sufficiently prolonged, will be worth while.

Most of the other sections of the book are dealt with rather conventionally and many of the illustrations are beautifully executed. It is a sensible and unusual arrangement, however, to describe joints in sequence with the bones that form them, while in the section on muscles many excellent photographs serve to emphasize how much may be learned from surface anatomy without suggesting that it is a separate study unrelated to dissecting-room observations. While much of the overall shortening of the book has been obtained by the virtual exclusion of histology and embryology, more has been achieved by brevity and condensation, so that very little factual information on gross adult anatomy has been omitted.

It is a unique feature of the book that many peripheral nerves are dealt with, in effect, only by figures and lengthy captions. All relevant information regarding such nerves is immediately at hand, but the captions are set out around and between the figures, utilizing every smallest bit of space, and cannot be read with any facility.

The authors' policy of drastic shortening without significant omissions of fact has led to the production of a book packed with information which, in many places, requires more than ordinary resolution to read. It may be supposed that few of the larger anatomical texts are read for pleasure, but this book may certainly be read usefully for information.

The burden upon the student of anatomy is placed there not so much by his books as by the requirements, real or supposed, of his examiners. It is becoming fashionable for examiners for M.B. and M.B. to demand less extensive knowledge of 'irrelevant detail' than in years past, but the full benefit of this relaxation has yet to be felt by students unable to gauge what will be 'irrelevant' when it comes to a *viva.* For the higher qualifications the standard of anatomical knowledge required is still extremely high. This new book provides the information required for anatomical examination at either level. It is very doubtful whether this information can be extracted more easily from this than from the standard texts, despite that it is so much shorter and that so much care and effort have been expended upon it.

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**THE PATHOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT OF PORTAL HYPERTENSION**


The book is a short monograph by Professor Milnes Walker, an acknowledged expert on the surgery of portal hypertension, and in it he summarizes his experience in over 200 cases of portal hypertension. There are chapters on the anatomy and physiology of the portal system, and also on the pathology and clinical aspects of portal disease. The section on experimental surgery is brief, but many references to the literature on this subject are appended. Operation details are dealt with concisely and of particular value is the section on the management of haemorrhage from esophageal varices. The text is easy to read and liberally illustrated with excellent colour plates, photographs and diagrams.

This monograph should prove of particular value to the general surgeon who wishes a concise and accurate analysis of this important subject. J.R.K.