LEUKAEMIA

By William Damshek, M.D., and Frederick Gunz, M.D., Ph.D. 420 pp. Grune and Stratton, New York and London, 1958.

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

British Medical Bulletin, volume 15, number 1, January, 1959. Edited by D. A. G. Galton. 88 pp. Published by the Medical Department, The British Council, London. 1959. 20s.

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. Mollin 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. Prankev, 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

By Alexander S. Wiener, A.B., M.D., F.A.C.P., F.C.A.P., and Irving B. Wexler, A.B., M.D., F.A.C.P. 150 pp. Grune and Stratton, New York and London. 1958.

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.