Fire metaphor itself. The victims in Kuwait and Southern and Northern Iraq were military personnel whereas autoimmune disease generally affects cells and tissues which are not part of the immune system. However, "Collateral Damage", while a more accurate description, would not have made such a racy book title.

Friendly Fire is written for the general reader and provides an engaging overview of the breadth of tissues and responses involved while giving an economical overview of the immune system itself. It is peppered with anecdotes relating to systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and HIV which are the major interests of the authors and are often entertaining. In this context it is a pity to see controversies within the research community dealt with as if there were unanimity. The authors present rheumatoid arthritis as a prototypical autoimmune disease although they will be aware of a strong current of opinion which refutes the evidence for this. On p 37 ankylosing spondylitis (AS) is described as "not a true autoimmune disease" yet it features in a figure on multiple cases of autoimmune diseases in a single family. To continue the military analogy, this seems to be a case of wanting their compo rations and eating them! Despite the fact that AS is strongly associated with HLA-B27 in populations and linked to the allele in affected sibs, there is no evidence for an autoimmune basis. The authors are guilty at times of overstatement, such as suggesting that the finding of abnormalities in T suppressor cell function in otherwise healthy relatives of SLE patients "is further confirmation that there are important genetic components of autoimmune conditions" (p 31). Indeed, this book includes the boldest declaration for the suppressor T cell in its purest form which I've seen in a long while.

Why should clinically orientated geneticists be interested in a book about autoimmune disease? Apart from the fact that around 5% of us will suffer from at least one autoimmune disease in our lifetime, the majority of these diseases have an inherited component. The development of almost every autoimmune condition is influenced by alleles at loci within the major histocompatibility complex or HLA system. However, we still have no clear understanding of the role of this gene system in the induction of such diseases other than a vague notion of thresholds being exceeded and balances upset. *Friendly Fire* ends with a chapter on potential therapies. These include several which have probably been mentioned for completeness rather than as serious candidates. However, the general reader will be interested to hear that there is real hope for the future as more immune system targets become identified and are experimentally manipulated. I was grateful to the authors for pointing out that it was Peter Parham who first elaborated the military metaphor. Perhaps he should be the one to arbitrate on whether macrophages represent heavy armour and whether cytokines count as chemical or biological warfare.

JERRY LANCHBURY

Secrets in the Genes. Editor Peter Turnpenny. (Pp 226; £12.95.) UK: British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering p/b. 1995.

As genetic knowledge increases and becomes more widely applied so it becomes more im-

portant for the adopted person to have information about his or her genetic parents and family history. Where this is unavailable he or she may feel particularly vulnerable when starting their own family and request "genetic testing" in general, a request difficult to discuss in a vacuum. Reasons for this anxiety will become clearer after reading this book.

It is multidisciplinary with contributions from clinicians, social workers, and a lawyer all involved in British Adoption Societies, together with clinical and laboratory geneticists and research psychologists. The only omission is perhaps an adopted person his or herself but a chapter of illustrative case studies and other case reports and quotes to some extent fill this gap.

The early sections outline medical aspects and stress the importance of obtaining adequate details of the birth parents' family history, although inevitably this may prove difficult. A number of chapters describe relevant genetic disorders with special emphasis on neurological, developmental, cardiac, and psychiatric disorders, and malignant disease. Inevitably repetition occurs as neurofibromatosis comes under several of these headings.

The middle section describes the "new genetics" and its clinical applications, including a chapter on the Human Genome Project. More detail is supplied than most readers will require but these chapters do make plain the rapidly changing backgrounds to which modern adoption practice has to adapt.

Throughout the book the exceedingly sensitive ethical issues weave and interweave. Confidentiality issues and the sometimes conflicting interests of the birth parents, the adopting parents, and, most importantly, of the child him or herself raise tensions often unresolvable.

Chapters on the genetics testing of children and on the psychological impact of genetic testing of any type illustrate how little factual information is available in these areas. There is a clear need for careful evaluation and scientific study so that guidelines for those involved in face to face encounter with both parents and children can be based on real information rather than anecdote.

Readers of this journal will know most of the genetics contained in this book but will benefit from reading it as their eyes will be opened to the impact of developments in genetics on adults adopted many years ago and on those currently concerned with the proceedings. It can be recommended as essential reading for all those professionally involved with the adoption process.

A CAROLINE BERRY

The Molecular Genetics of Cancer. Cold Spring Harbor Symposia on Quantitative Biology. Vol LIX. (Pp 739; \$99.00.) New York: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. 1994.

This volume is the latest offering in a distinguished series of symposium proceedings emanating from the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. It presents a collection of well written papers/reviews from participants of the symposium of the same name held at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory a year ago. The volume is organised around five subjects: control of cell cycle and cell growth, checkpoints and genome stability, apoptosis, gen-

etic models, human cancer genes and their products, and genetic methods for diagnosis and cancer therapy.

Given that the papers presented in the final category were focused primarily on gene therapy, it is the penultimate category that would be of immediate relevance to medical geneticists. Two retrospectives review the genetic approaches deployed in the identification and cloning of the BRCA1 gene, which should prove a useful body of experience to geneticists contemplating a similar exercise on their favoured syndrome. Other papers discuss the characterisation of various cloned genes that were originally located by genetic approaches as well as discussing models of tumour development and progression.

The other chapters are much more heavily based on basic biological research into cell regulation. In this regard, they do not disappoint, providing handy reviews of the cutting edge in this burgeoning area of investigation and thereby offering a useful background into the processes that might be active in cancer. They may also supply a ready source of candidate genes for further investigation by medical geneticists wishing to characterise the aetiology of human cancer. A basic understanding of cell regulation is assumed in the reviews and less well prepared readers would be advised to have read the relevant chunks of the current edition of a decent undergraduate molecular biology text, say, *The molecular biology of the cell*.

In summary, the content of this volume is heavily biased toward the biology of cancer and although mostly not of direct relevance to medical geneticists, it is a useful reference text to consult when attempting to develop a fresh approach to genetic research in cancer and as such may be usefully acquired by medical libraries.

DAVID HUEN

Familial Adenomatous Polyposis and Other Polyposis Syndromes. Editors Phillips PAS, Spigelman AD, Thompson JPS. (Pp 234; £65.00.) London: Edward Arnold. 1995.

This is an extensive book about FAP and associated disorders by acknowledged experts in this field. The book inevitably has a surgical bias, but in some senses this makes it even more applicable to a clinical genetics readership. It contains strong chapters on introduction, history and registry, pathology, endoscopy, screening including CHRPE identification, and the various surgical options. The St Mark's experience with FAP is such that they of all people are probably best placed to offer surgical guidelines on the management of this condition. Inevitably there will be a slight bias in their ascertainment with more severely affected cases and families being referred. Nonetheless, their recommendations are broadly applicable, particularly to FAP itself.

There are, nonetheless, areas in which sometimes rather arbitrary guidelines are put forward for various aspects of screening in FAP and other polyposis conditions. For example, while the experience of St Mark's with screening of the upper GI tract for duodenal polyps and cancer is undeniable, they are yet to show a benefit for this form of screening, and in some senses this should be treated in the same way as screening in other cancer settings, such as that of the ovary with ovarian

ultrasound. It is certainly important from a research point of view, that upper GI screening is evaluated, but this should perhaps only be done in large centres, and not recommended to all gastroenterologists who may have only one or two affected patients. Similarly, although screening guidelines for Peutz-Jeghers disease appear reasonable on the surface, the recommendations for mammography screening on a five yearly basis from 25 years of age, and then two yearly from 38, are totally at odds with guidelines for high risk screening in breast cancer in general. There is a tendency to assume that screening should be offered for any tumour that can be shown to be occurring in excess without applying the usual rules of efficacy. There are also suggested screening protocols involving CT scanning for desmoid disease, and of small bowel enemas for Peutz-Jeghers disease, which involve exposure to fairly high doses of radiation on a repeated basis. In conditions where cancer risk is likely to be increased by exposure to radiation, a more cautious approach to this form of screening may be advised.

Inevitably the chapter on genetics is already outdated, but as the readership of this journal is likely to have extensive knowledge of the genetics of this condition if they were to purchase the book, then it is for the other aspects that the book would be bought in the first place. With the minor reservations that have already been made, I think this book should be highly recommended for those who are managing FAP in the clinical setting. Certainly for any polyposis register, a book like this should be purchased. It is incumbent upon clinical geneticists to know more than

the risks of certain features occurring, but also to have a working knowledge of all the options available, including surgery. I would therefore recommend this book to those with more than a passing interest in FAP.

GARETH EVANS

Animals with Novel Genes. Editor N Maclean. (Pp 266; £30.00.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994. ISBN 0-521-43256-1.

This book is intended for advanced undergraduates and graduate students and seeks to cover the current and future applications of transgenic technology from protozoans to large mammals. This is an ambitious but important goal as the production and analysis of transgenic animals is a rapidly expanding field and an increasingly vital tool in the investigation of gene function. Current transgenic technology allows the examination of regulatory elements in a complex environment, overexpression or ectopic expression of a variety of gene products, or the elimination of specific genes. Such studies add to those performed in the much simpler environment of tissue culture where, for example, it is difficult to assess accurately the developmental and tissue specific nature of DNA sequences controlling gene expression.

The first chapter provides an overview of the production and use of transgenic animals and examines ethical and legal problems associated with such organisms. Ethical questions are tackled in a very straightforward

manner but are unlikely to find universal approval. The subsequent chapters review transgenic insects, fish, birds, rodents, and large mammals before ending with a very brief chapter on transgenic organisms from other orders. Overall these reviews are well presented with a wealth of useful information and a good selection of references to enable further reading. Readers without a molecular biology background may find some sections rather heavy going but they should still find it possible to grasp the range and potential power of the various methods of genetic manipulation currently in use.

The major limitation of this book is that shared by nearly all publications in fast moving fields. Indeed this book is the successor of many of those only written in 1991 and 1992 which are cited in the introductory chapter. The various contributions in this volume appear to have been written in 1993 and already the field has moved on considerably in many areas. The authors have made brave efforts to predict those areas of future development and in most cases are unlikely to have to wait for long to assess the accuracy of their predictions. In summary, this book is a good review of the current state of transgenic technology and will serve as a useful overview text for senior molecular biology based courses. It will also be a useful primer for those contemplating the production of transgenic animals. In the current climate of expensive speciality books the price is very reasonable and I would recommend its purchase both by departmental libraries and individual readers.

DOMINIC J WELLS