they merely report workshop presentations rather than providing any indication that the methods or conclusions stimulated suggestions, criticism, pontification about their significance, or so on; in short, there is no evidence that there were any discussions.

I would not buy this book. For reviews, or for the primary literature, I would look elsewhere. The only merit of the book is that it serves to remind one of the diversity of work on RNA and of the need for meetings and editors to recognise this. The UCLA meeting itself was large, and attended by members from most laboratories with interests in RNA. Such meetings are excellent for lifting one out of a specialist's rut and for providing the comprehensive coverage lacking in this book. They are particularly valuable for newcomers to a field. Nonetheless, the outcome of this diversity and the dichotomy of attitude to which I referred earlier may mean that for meetings on RNA the future lies in smaller, more specialised and more intense meetings; books will move in the same direction or towards compilations of reviews. Perhaps this book, in missing the mark, has made a point after all: the field that Cech has done so much to revitalise has grown up already.

N. W. SIMMONDS
The Edinburgh School of Agriculture
Kings Buildings
Edinburgh


This is the definitive and authoritative reference book of chromosome variation in man. It first appeared in 1975 and has gradually achieved pre-eminent status in the cytogeneticist's library. Reading it is like dipping into a telephone directory, an exercise best avoided unless one wants a particular number.

The book is organized, as one would expect, in numerical order of chromosomes. Almost two-thirds is taken up by structural variations and anomalies, marching from 1 to 22 and then from X to Y. Numerical anomalies follow and there is a final section on chromosomal breakage syndromes. The subject index is a little thin, but the author index is quite splendid. It is interesting to note the extent to which human clinical cytogenetics has been dominated by the French School of Boué, de Grouchy, Dutrillaux, Gallano, and Lejeune.

One cannot really fault this superb collection of data. Just as no medical geneticist can work without a McKusick, no cytogeneticist can be without a Borgoankar.

DAVID J. H. BROCK
Human Genetics Unit
Western General Hospital
Crewe Road, Edinburgh