clinical microbiology. Apart from a too ready acceptance of standards as though they are god-given absolutes (is this an opportunity to use the word "data" in its true sense?), there is much food for thought. Chapters 23 and 24 are disappointing. An account of paediatric bacteriology (Chapter 23) of any profundity is probably impossible; for a variety of reasons, the gap between the laboratory and the clinician is probably at its widest here. Accounts of techniques such as ELISA (Chapter 24) are dull because they are of interest only to those who actually practice them at the bench, once the theoretical basis has been grasped. Chapter 25, on trends in organisms isolated and their antibiotic sensitivity, is a classic ending—"not with a bang but a whimper". The plain fact is that over the past decade almost nothing has changed. *Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus* still rule despite the threats of more exciting contenders, and little of note has happened to antibiotic resistance despite ominous rumblings.

My overall feeling is that the book provides useful source material for aspirants to the membership of the Royal College of Pathologists and the like, as well as for their examiners. If it were half as long and less irritatingly insular it would behoove (*sic*: OED—obsolete except in North America) any practising clinical microbiologist to read it. As it is, perseverance with at least some of the chapters would be rewarded.

I. PHILLIPS

Handbook of medical parasitology

By VIGAR ZAMAN and LOH AH KEONG. 1982. Wright PSG, Bristol. Pp. v and 218. £17.00.

This is a paperback book with 218 pages and 334 illustrations, including 32 life-cycle diagrams. It is arranged in four sections, on protozoa, helminths, arthropods and diagnostic techniques. There is a very limited reading list of 18 items. The preface tells us that the book is written especially with students in mind and that "illustrations are the back bone of good teaching".

There is no doubt that there is a need for a book on Medical Parasitology, suitable for students and for teachers of lower level parasitology courses. One of the major problems with this book is that the black and white plates are obviously taken from the coffee-table colour atlas previously published by the senior author and have suffered greatly from being considerably reduced in size and being reproduced from colour originals. Some have lost all recognizable qualities, and the reviewer had some amusement from covering up the text and asking experts in the field to identify the more ridiculous examples. In many cases, the pathologist could not even identify the tissues. One would also have expected a textbook on parasites of man to have some pictures of patients showing the more bizarre clinical manifestations of parasitoses. On the whole, the line drawings of life-cycles are useful but occasionally are a little difficult to disentangle, especially where there is a zoonotic component in the life-cycle. The world maps with symbols showing distribution are a good idea—even if occasionally one is misled by adventitious spots on the maps—with only occasional inaccuracies. More careful editorial work might have had the line drawings more closely associated with the relevant text.

The text represents less than half the book. Most sections start with a useful list of definitions, although the authors define a parasite in terms that cover a lion and a cow! Although little space is devoted to any one parasite the information is very clearly presented and is usually accurate. One could nit-pick through the text but this is hardly productive at this late stage; minor errors could have been identified by a suitable referee at the proof stage. Final judgement of the book must take into account the statement of the authors that the book was written "especially with students in mind". The text, whilst brief, must receive a good mark, but the half-tone figures ought to have been severely pruned so that the more useful ones could have been larger. What might put most students off is the price of the book; at £17, it is very expensive. A cheap textbook on Medical Parasitology for students is still needed.

D. A. DENHAM

Cell wall-deficient bacteria—basic principles and clinical significance

Edited by G. J. DOMINGUE. 1982. Addison-Wesley Publishers Ltd, London. Pp. xi and 595. £16.45.

The difficulty and contentiousness of this subject are highlighted by the contents of this book.