BOOKS RECEIVED

Boyd's introduction to the study of disease

By H. SHELDON. 1988. Lea & Febiger (UK) Ltd, Beckenham, Kent. Pp. vii and 702. £22.35.

This undergraduate text contains two main sections: general principles of pathology and systemic pathology. There is an opening chapter that briefly reviews aspects of normal biochemistry, cell biology and physiology. This is followed by an interesting and well written synopsis of the history of medicine and pathology. Chapters covering the general pathology of injury, inflammation, infection, and neoplasia follow. The second section contains chapters dedicated to specific organs or organ systems.

The book suffers more than most the problems of many other general texts: few areas are covered adequately, while there are several areas of the undergraduate pathology curriculum that are omitted completely—notably much of haematology and biochemical pathology. Alternative texts of comparable price succeed in presenting a more adequate volume of information in a comparable space. Much of the treatment of modern aspects of pathology, particularly oncogenes, are less up to date than might be expected of a recently published general text. The book is nevertheless written in a pleasant, chatty style that is easy to read, and the personal style with which it presents pathology will appeal to many readers.

T. J. CHAMBERS

Making monoclonals

By DIANE G. NEWELL, B. W. MCBRIDE and S. A. CLARK. 1988. Published by the Public Health Laboratory Service, PHLS Supplies, 61 Colindale Avenue, London. Pp. iv and 94. £10.00 (cash with order).

This small book aptly claims to be “a practical beginner's” guide to the production and characterisation of (mouse) monoclonal antibodies against bacteria and viruses, which are for use mainly in the development of diagnostic tests. Novices and the more experienced alike can expect to find something of benefit therein and worth the outlay. There are six chapters dealing with immunisation, fusion techniques, the screening of cultures for antibody production, the large-scale production, purification and storage of monoclonal antibodies and hybridoma cells, the characterisation of monoclonal antibodies, and their application in the development of diagnostic tests. Detailed protocols are given of the important basic procedures, or an appropriate reference is provided, and the emphasis is almost entirely on the practical rather than the theoretical aspects of the topic.

J. C. BOOTH

Portraits from memory

By SIR JAMES HOWIE. 1988. British Medical Journal, London. Pp. viii and 161. £17.50; US\$29.00.

The circumstances of the development of a discipline shape its principles—and the principals then establish its tradition, set its standards, and develop its character. It is Hogmanay as I write, and my reader will see that I am playing with words; but James Howie makes *his* words work. His characters and his own character are alive in this Memoir Club edition in which his Portraits from the popular BMJ's series are now published as a complete collection. He brings a discriminating eye and a fine firm touch to this work, and he displays a remarkable memory for detail. Some of the outlines are snapshots rather than portraits. There is an interesting variety of subject and of angle.

Not all of the portraits are of medical microbiologists or pathologists. Great characters from other branches of medicine and other walks of life are presented to remind us of our place in the scheme of things and to preserve the perspective, but medical microbiology and clinical pathology get the centre stage. It is fitting that a man who has done so much in his lifetime to identify and sustain our collective cause should give us such a useful text. We are indebted to him. We should each have a copy of this book to remind us of the debt and our heritage. The challenge for us is to match the examples that are so well drawn.

J. G. COLLEE

Botulism. The organism, its toxins, the disease

By L. DS. SMITH and H. SUGIYAMA. 1988, 2nd edn. American Lecture Series in Clinical Microbiology (ed. by A. Balows), Pubn No. 1078. Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois. Pp. xi and 171.

Botulism is of interest in relation to public health, agriculture, wildlife, the food industry, and the environment. The disease in man was recognised some two centuries ago and the causative agent, *Clostridium botulinum*, was isolated and described by van Ermengem in 1896. It is surprising that, despite the long history of botulism, many new and important facts have emerged in the past decade or so.

In 1977 the first edition of this book appeared under the single authorship of L. DS. Smith and rapidly made its mark as one of the most useful and authoritative accounts available. In the light of recent progress, the second edition, by L. DS. Smith and H. Sugiyama, is to be warmly welcomed.

As well as having been thoroughly revised, the book has been expanded to take account, in particular, of new information on pathogenesis and toxins, and of food microbiology. The resulting volume gives a comprehensive picture of the organism and its relevance to the five fields of interest listed in the first sentence of this review. This it does with a directness and conciseness that bear witness to the expertise of the two authors.