BOOKS RECEIVED

Introduction to Bacteria, 2nd Edition

P. SINGLETON. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester. Pp. 221. £11.95. ISBN 0 471 93146 2

The author of this 2nd edition of *Introduction to Bacteria* states that it is aimed at students of biology, biotechnology, medicine, food and environmental science. It assumes no prior knowledge of bacteria.

Over the 16 chapters it builds an integrated picture of the structure, growth, molecular biology and metabolism of the bacterial cell. There are more in depth and detailed sections on bacterial metabolism and genetics with useful diagrams and examples of the important metabolic cycles and pathways. One section on bacteria in medicine covers bacteria as pathogens, mechanisms of disease and the body's defences. It gives examples of normal human microflora and bacterial infections, but it is a pity that no mention is made of the "newer" causes of infection related to AIDS. However, it is encouraging to see in the section covering aspects of practical bacteriology that attention is drawn to good laboratory practice including laboratory and personal safety. Unfortunately, some of the examples of laboratory methods and diagnostic tests are a little outdated.

On the whole, at £11.95, this paperback is a useful book for students of biology. It is clearly written, easily readable and provides a wide but basic background to bacteria.

H. KILGARIFF

Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Advances in Host Defense Mechanisms, Volume 8

Edited by T. C. QUINN. 1992. ISBN 0-88167-882-1. Raven Press, New York. Pp. 340. \$112.50.

This is an excellent and timely overview of the whole field of sexually transmitted disease (STD) research. It is particularly welcome at this time because it counters the recent trend in this area towards relative neglect of topics which do not impinge directly on the HIV epidemic. The book opens with two very useful background chapters which summarise epidemiology and general aspects of host defence mechanisms in the genital tract. The following chapters cover both the basic immunobiology and clinical impact of a wide variety of organisms and diseases with an emphasis on immunological aspects, as might be expected from the series title. Thus, there are detailed and expert reviews of recent research on chlamydial infection, gonorrhoea and the gonococcus, syphilis and *Treponema pallidum*, the pathogenesis of HIV infection, and the immune responses to genital herpes, papillomavirus and cytomegalovirus. Finally, there is a summary of the prospects for vaccination at mucosal surfaces for STDs, and a stimulating forward view which emphasises the need for integration of the basic, clinical and social aspects of STD research.

Overall, the book should be required reading for a remarkably wide range of those working in STD research, including general immunologists and microbiologists, clinical scientists and those directly involved in clinical practice and patient care. It is well written, carefully edited and nicely printed and bound; although expensive, it represents good value and should appear on numerous laboratory and clinic bookshelves.

C. W. PENN

Medical and Environmental Aspects of Anaerobes

Edited by B. I. DUERDEN, J. S. BRAZIER, S. V. SEDDON and W. G. WADE. 1992. ISBN 1 871816 13 0. Wrightson Biomedical Publishing Ltd, Petersfield. Pp. 265. £42.00.

The Society for Anaerobic Microbiology (formerly the Anaerobe Discussion Group) has held symposia in Cambridge biennially since 1979: this book represents the proceedings of the 7th such meeting held in July 1991.

The contents of the book are wide-ranging and consist of 48 "chapters" arranged in five sections: Anaerobes in clinical practice, The toxins of anaerobic bacteria, Anaerobes in intestinal physiology, Environmental and ecological aspects of anaerobes, and Recent changes in the taxonomy of non-sporing anaerobes. Each chapter represents the account of a contribution at the meeting, whether keynote lecture, free oral presentation or poster. The length of each chapter is thus highly variable. The keynote lectures tend to be longer (c. 10–12 pages), with more detail, while the free oral papers and posters are extended abstracts of short, but variable length (c. 1–3 pages).

The first impressions of the book are of excellent production, attractive style and overall professionalism – by no means typical of many such multi-authored conference proceedings. Although medical microbiology is well represented, there are papers covering fundamental as well as ecological and environmental aspects of anaerobes. This reflects the membership and general philosophy of the society. As someone who did not attend the meeting, I have found the book to be a mine of useful information. The editors and organisers have assembled a comprehensive programme which covers many topical and interesting (and amazingly diverse) aspects of current anaerobic microbiology.

I. POXTON

Environmental Health Procedures, 3rd edition

W. H. BASSETT. 1992. ISBN 0 412 39490 1. Chapman and Hall, London. Pp. 486. £35.00.

This book specifically provides an overview of the procedures relating to many of the aspects of environmental health practice, i.e., Public Health Acts, the Building Act, the Water Industry Act (1991), Public Health (Control of Disease) Act (1984), Environmental Protection Act (1990), Clean Air Acts, Health and Safety at Work, Food Safety Act (1990) and licensing. The format of the book is primarily involved in the provision of procedures contained within these various acts and should be of particular value for environmental health officers and members of the legal profession who become involved in these areas. The book may also be of use to doctors in public health medicine and, perhaps, microbiologists. However, further details outlining the various acts, in particular the Food Safety Act and other food control legislation, would have been of value and broadened the spectrum of appeal of this book to clinical microbiologists.

T. S. J. ELLIOTT