The papers on the restriction endonucleases of the bacilli predict that they will be valuable tools in molecular biology and some of these predictions have already been fulfilled. It is fair to say that this volume is worth possessing for the bacilli alone.

Symposium II was entitled "*Neisseria gonorrhoeae*" and includes only four papers. They give very interesting reviews of physiology and metabolism with particular reference to the evolution of antibiotic resistance.

Symposium III, entitled "Genetics and molecular biology of industrial microorganisms", includes 22 papers most of which are only two or three pages in length. It was by way of being a selection of hors d'oeuvres before the Third International GIM Symposium to be held in 1978. Interest of industrial microbiologists in the techniques of mutant isolation and genetic mapping has increased very greatly in recent years and the papers presented at this symposium cover a wide range of organisms and industrial applications. Several are concerned with secondary metabolism and antibiotic production, as would have been expected, but the genetics of alkane utilisation and of nitrogen fixation also find a place here. This is a useful collection of papers and indicates the steady advance of microbial genetics from *Escherichia coli* and allied bacteria to a wide range of organisms.

"Microbiology-1976" is well up to the standard of the previous volumes in the series and will be extensively used by many microbiologists.

PATRICIA H. CLARK

Selected topics in clinical bacteriology

Edited by JOHN DE LOUVOIS. 1976. London: Baillière Tindall. Pp. vii and 262. £6.50.

Eight well-chosen review articles have been assembled for this volume by John de Louvois—although, disappointingly, there is nothing from his own pen. All of the themes are important, starting appropriately with a discussion by R. Freeman on the general problems in the diagnosis and management of infection in some of our most vulnerable hospital patients. As befits a leading exponent of the nitro-blue tetrazolium (NBT) test of neutrophil activity, Freeman strongly advocates the use of this test as a rapid means of detecting possible infection in a wide range of situations. He appears to obtain good results in the complex environment of the intensive care unit, but makes only passing mention of the problems created by non-specific inhibition of NBT reduction, notably in patients undergoing treatment with corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive drugs.

David Reeves and M. J. Bywaters comprehensively survey antibiotic assay procedures. They begin with a very useful summary of the pharmacokinetics of antimicrobial agents, stressing, for example, that the concentration of unbound drug in the tissues is all-important, despite the current obsession with total levels in plasma. Unfortunately this section is marred by the transposition of some figures and legends, as well as by errors relating to units and figure references in the text.

The remaining sections include a detailed review of the daunting subject of general bacterial taxonomy by L. R. Hill, and specific chapters on the bacteroides group and viridans streptococci by D. A. Leigh and G. Colman respectively. The microbiological problems associated with inhalation therapy equipment and medicinal products are also dealt with authoritatively. The book ends with an admirable, if too brief, account of the microbiology and ecology of human skin by W. C. Noble. As he rightly points out this most accessible of organs is one of those neglected most by microbiologists.

Each of the sections discusses an area of growth in clinical bacteriology; together they form a helpful and interesting book.

S. SELWYN

Microbiological methods

By C. H. COLLINS and PATRICIA M. LYNE. 1976. 4th ed. London: Butterworths. Pp. 521. £9.50.

The scope of the 4th edition of this practical handbook has been restricted to "technical methods for the culture and identification of bacteria and fungi of importance in medicine,