the reviewer would censure the publishers for claiming to produce a series of monographs on "Patterns of Progress" when a major contribution is four years late and the specialist editor has the opportunity to bring progress up to date, in summary form, no later than two years before final publication.

R. J. W. REES

Basic medical microbiology

By R. F. BOYD and B. G. HOERL. 1977. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. Pp. xii and 578. US\$11.95.

This is a comprehensive account including parasitology, mycology, virology, immunology and "selected topics" which are oral microbiology, hospital-acquired infections and anaerobic infections. It is intended for students of subjects supplementary to medicine and also as an introduction for medical, dental and veterinary students. It contains a great deal of valuable information and is easy to read provided that the terms are understood; unfamiliar words often go unexplained when they first appear in the text but a glossary is provided. This is a good idea, but the glossary should be complete; for example, antibody and avidity do not appear.

The only serious error noticed was the statement in a table that 1-2% phenol can be used in hospital for its activity against tubercle bacilli. The section on treatment in anaerobic infection seems out of place in a book of this kind and few would agree that chloramphenicol is the drug of choice in a seriously ill patient; there is no mention of metronidazole for use against anaerobes.

The fact that the authors are non-dental scientists working in an American school of dentistry does not detract from the usefulness of the book to students in Britain. Medical and dental students and laboratory technicians in training who have sufficient knowledge of terminology will find it particularly useful as an introduction to the subject. It has many excellent photographs and line drawings, and is very reasonably priced.

E. JOAN STOKES

The clinical laboratory as an aid in chemotherapy of infectious disease

Edited by A. BONDI, J. T. BARTOLA and J. E. PRIER. 1977. Baltimore, London and Tokyo: University Park Press. Pp. xii and 183. £11.95.

The rather cumbersome title hides the proceedings of the 7th annual symposium of the Eastern Pennsylvania branch of the American Society for Microbiology, held in November 1975. The book that has now emerged is a survey of present techniques and prospects in the field of antibiotic sensitivity testing and assay, well organised with little overlap and quite a nice dovetailing of contributions. The editors have had less success in other directions: the book does little to invalidate Oscar Wilde's view that "the English have everything in common with the Americans except, of course, language", occasionally lapsing into aberrations that are, I suspect, not even good American. The index is a collector's item—arbitrary, incomplete (*Escherichia coli*, mentioned on nearly every page, gets one puzzling citation) and totally unhelpful.

Topics covered range from disk testing, through new devices, to specialized techniques for testing the susceptibility of mycobacteria, anaerobes and fungi. There are also chapters on antibiotic combinations, assay methods, laboratory monitoring of antibiotic resistance patterns and the necessity of sensitivity testing. The scope of the book is thus attractively wide, but unfortunately a number of the contributions are somewhat tendentious and most are disappointingly superficial. No discussion of the papers is recorded.

For these reasons the book can be recommended as a useful introductory text for newcomers to the field, but the majority of contributions are too pedestrian to be of more than passing interest to established workers.

DAVID GREENWOOD