BOOKS RECEIVED

Toxoplasmosis of animals and man

By J. P. DUBEY and C. P. BEATTIE. 1989. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Fla. Pp. 220. £108.00.

Toxoplasmosis is a parasite disease of interest to physicians, veterinarians, biologists and research workers. The authors have reviewed the literature and present a considered summary in a book that will find favour with all four groups. It is divided into three main sections: the biology of the parasite, the illness in man, and infection of animals. Clear illustrations are provided and there are over one thousand references. Greatest emphasis is placed on the veterinarian aspects, and data on clinical infections in man, especially AIDS patients and transplant recipients, are rather brief.

For the specialist, this book represents a welcome addition to the personal library. Those without a particular interest in the disease may find the detail excessive and prefer to consult a more general text.

R. E. HOLLIMAN

Campylobacter pylori and gastroduodenal disease

Edited by B. J. RATHBONE and R. V. HEATLEY. 1989. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford. Pp. ix and 290.

The rapidly expanding literature on *Campylobacter pylori* is such that single review articles (there are at least a dozen to choose from) are no longer adequate for those with more than a passing interest in the subject—and that must surely include most medical microbiologists. This book is an admirable remedy. It contains 34 chapters by leading researchers in nine countries. All aspects are covered: historical background, bacteriology, pathology and clinical gastroenterology.

Considering the rapidity of progress in the field, the book is well up to date; many 1988 papers are included in the comprehensively referenced chapters. Multiple authorship has given rise to duplication in places, notably on treatment, but this is a small price to pay for speed of production. It is well produced and there are some outstanding chapters (Lee's overview of mucus-colonising organisms is but one example), but all authors perform the invaluable task of distilling the essentials from a somewhat inflated and repetitious literature.

This is a timely production, coming when *C. pylori* is beginning to influence routine clinical gastroenterological practice. I thoroughly recommend it.

M. B. SKIRROW

Parvoviruses and human disease

Edited by J. R. PATTISON. 1988. CRC Press Inc., Boca Raton, Fla. Pp. 181.

In the 1970s, during a search for hepatitis B virus in serum, a new precipitating system was found which was later recognised to be due to a novel human virus (parvovirus B19), present in considerable amounts in serum and capable of forming a line of precipitate with the corresponding antibody. The finding remained a curiosity for some time but the virus has now emerged as a pathogen in its own right. This book is a summary of its position so far.

Investigations, primarily in the editor's own laboratory, demonstrated that B19 was the elusive cause of erythema infectiosum (also known as Fifth disease and Slapped cheek syndrome) and was possibly also responsible for haemolytic crises in patients with sickle-cell disease and other diseases where red cell survival was shorter than normal. Subsequent work has confirmed that these disparate syndromes are due to the same virus and that infection can present differently in children and adults. The book summarises these investigations. Each section was written by those involved, which gives authority to the whole.

Subsequent to publication, further evidence has accumulated of a role for the virus in pregnant women, as a cause of fetal loss. However, although there is a systemic infection, the virus is unlikely to join the ranks of agents inducing fetal deformities.

The book, then, contains useful basic information on a virus whose role in disease was unknown less than 10 years ago. Other parvoviruses, infecting both man and animals, are well described and the B19 virus, which is the real hero of this book, is put into context against the others. The chapters describe the clinical features of infection in previously healthy persons as well as in patients with underlying haemolytic diseases, outline volunteer studies and describe the methods of routine diagnosis. They provide information of interest to virologists, microbiologists, clinicians (in infectious disease and in obstetrics), those who wish to plan volunteer studies and even, perhaps, readers of whodunnits. The story of B19 and other parvoviruses is not yet complete but work reported in this book will form the basis for future studies and it will be seminal reference work for some years to come.

C. R. MADELEY