BOOKS RECEIVED

Medical microbiology

Ed. by R. CRUIKSHANK, J. P. DUGUID, B. P. MARMION and R. H. A. SWAIN. Vol. 1, "Microbial Infections". 12th ed., 1973. Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. Pp. xii and 667. £6.50, limp bound edition £4.75.

Those of us who were brought up on "Mackie and McCartney" will scarcely recognise the 12th edition as the lineal successor of that famous book. The first nine editions were essentially laboratory handbooks written for practising microbiologists and represented the personal and at the same time eclectic approach of its two authors. As the years went by the book acquired more and more theory under the editorship of Professor Robert Cruikshank and now in its 12th edition the technical matter is completely separated, and vol. 1 is offered as a sizeable tome aimed primarily at medical and science students.

It is of course wholly laudable that the undergraduate student should not be burdened with the technical aspects of a subject. The latter is for the specialist and only obscures the view. What the medical student wants—and rightfully expects—is a conceptual presentation of a topic, within the framework of the whole of medicine, which gives just enough detail to help him in his daily work and at the same time provides a solid groundwork for further learning. Too much detail is not only ephemeral, but will actually blur the picture.

This is not a book that can be faulted on clarity of style, accuracy of information or even completeness—the list of contributors is in itself a guarantee of that. In every accepted sense of the word this is a superb book, but it is written by microbiologists for microbiologists. The subject is presented in individual essays as the microbiologist sees the matter and not as the student or practitioner who encounters syndromes. The same syndrome may be caused by widely different agents and the right one has to be sorted out as quickly as possible both for successful therapy and for epidemiological reasons. It may be argued that this is not really microbiology but clinical medicine, but if so this is the aspect about which the student wants to learn above all. The true content of medical microbiology is as much medicine as microbiology. I am sure, however, that this volume will continue to exercise great influence throughout the world, as its predecessors did, and will prove to be of very great value to those who wish to take up microbiology as their vocation.

S. D. ELEK

Tissue culture: methods and applications

Ed. by PAUL F. KRUSE, JR and M. K. PATTERSON, JR. 1973. New York and London: Academic Press. Pp. xxvii and 868; 264 text figs. £10.15.

This is a remarkable book, having no fewer than 182 contributors who, among them, have provided 157 articles. To anybody who has ever edited a volume with a clutch of scientists as authors, the task of eliciting contributions, having them submitted in time and co-ordinating them on this scale is awesome. To see the volume through to successful publication while the articles are still of current interest is indeed a notable achievement, and it is tragic that one of the editors, Paul Kruse, to whom this book is dedicated, should not have lived to see the fruits of his labours. He was a truly public-spirited scientist who devoted much of his energies to promoting the field through the Tissue Culture Association, which he served faithfully for many years, and the volume is a fine tribute to him.

It is divided into fourteen sections. The first is concerned with dissociation of tissues by enzymes such as pronase, trypsin and collagenase. The second, with 33 contributors, is concerned with the preparation of primary cultures from mammals, a variety of cold-blooded vertebrates, some invertebrates and plants. The third section deals with the harvesting of cells. Section four comprises several contributions dealing with replicate culture methods