

rather better than average. Furthermore, the publishers, the American Society for Microbiology, have produced it with admirable speed and efficiency and have managed to keep the size down to less than 1400 pages, distributed between two volumes. This considerable achievement (the Proceedings of the 9th Congress ran to 8 volumes) has been accomplished by summarising each of the 26 main symposia in a few pages and electing to publish free papers as extended (generally two-page) abstracts. This format, which keeps the contributions succinct but reasonably meaningful, is rather successful and highly recommended to others planning to publish large symposia.

Of their kind, then, these volumes are uncommonly successful and will remain the standard work of reference until, in little over a year, the ephemera of Zürich are drowned in a new tidal wave of data from the 11th International Congress.

D. GREENWOOD

**Recent Advances in Clinical Biochemistry.** Number 1. Edited by K. G. M. M. Alberti. (Pp. viii + 298; illustrated; £13.00.) Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1978.

The 'Recent Advances' series is well established in many specialities and indeed in Pathology has run to nine editions. It is suprising, therefore, that the publishers have only just chosen to include clinical biochemistry in the series. This first volume is a welcome addition and will be of great interest not only to laboratory workers but also to colleagues working in other disciplines.

The standard of review throughout is high, and the choice of subjects covered shows wise editorial decisions. There are chapters on growing points, such as intracellular chemical pathology and the use of stable isotopes in investigative medicine, but more everyday matters such as laboratory organisation, computers, and laboratory automation (including the viewpoint of a manufacturer) are included. A chapter on the forensic analysis of drugs and poisons includes clear descriptions of equipment and methodologies used. The clinical aspects are not neglected: hyperlipoproteinaemia and thyroid function tests are discussed in a stimulating fashion.

This book is valuable to all grades of pathologists working in chemical pathology laboratories but those studying for

postgraduate examinations would be foolish to neglect this book. They should consider themselves fortunate to be able to find so much information lucidly reviewed and reasonably priced. They should buy their own copies and not rely on the departmental library.

BRENDA M. SLAVIN

**Molecules, Cells, and Disease: An Introduction to the Biology of Disease.** By Julien L. van Lancker. (Pp. xv + 311; illustrated; \$14.80.) Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer-Verlag. 1977.

For the undergraduate approaching the clinical portion of his curriculum or the scientifically educated layman, who wishes to be informed about current concepts of disease processes and the historical route by which these concepts were derived, this book can be thoroughly recommended. The contents are fully outlined in the rather cumbersome title and the approach is refreshingly multidisciplinary. It could well be prescribed reading for junior staff at the beginning of each new academic year.

On the debit side the chapter on the pathology of cell membranes, admittedly a difficult subject to simplify, lacks the clarity and appeal of the other chapters. Further, certain of the diagrams, such as the schematic representation of the histology of tuberculosis and the morbid anatomical appearances of cerebral haemorrhage have been over-simplified to the point of being almost uninformative. These, however, are minor shortcomings in what is an engrossing introductory book.

F. WALKER

**Immunochemistry: An Advanced Textbook.** Edited by L. E. Glynn and M. W. Steward. (Pp. x + 628; illustrated; £24.00.) Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto: John Wiley and Sons. 1977.

It is a surprising fact that no comprehensive textbook on immunochemistry has been available in the past. Generally, immunoglobulin structure and genetics based on immunoglobulin synthesis have been dealt with in chapters on broader aspects of immunology.

Immunoglobulins can fairly be classified as the most complex and polyfunctional of the proteins known to man. Apart from the fascination of the diverse nature of the antigen-combining sites

in the variable regions there are multiple functional structures in the constant regions so that, for instance, IgA can independently interact with the complement system, neutrophils, macrophages, K cells, platelets, eosinophils, and basophils.

Analysis of the structure of immunoglobulins has meant that many of the conventional theories of genetic coding for protein structure have had to be revised.

Glynn and Steward have succeeded in persuading some of the best authorities in the various aspects of immunochemistry to contribute to this book. It is certainly a necessary volume for any immunologist's bookshelf. However, many pathologists in other specialities who become involved with immunoglobulins in either radioimmunoassay or microbial diagnosis will find this a useful reference book.

I. C. M. MACLENNAN

**Major Problems in Pathology.** Volume 8. 'Use and Interpretation of Renal Biopsy'. By G. E. Striker, L. J. Quadracci, and R. E. Cutler. (Pp. xiii + 347; illustrated; £17.50.) Philadelphia, London, Toronto: W. B. Saunders. 1978.

This book provides a concise, well-written account of those diseases in which renal biopsy may be helpful either in establishing a diagnosis and prognosis or in estimating progression. It is based upon the author's experience of about 4000 biopsies collected from patients of all ages from the Seattle area of the USA over an 18-year period.

The material is organised under five main headings: renal diseases of acute onset, slowly progressive renal diseases, the nephrotic syndrome, renal diseases associated with systemic syndromes, and transplantation. For each disease process within these categories the morphology is described in detail and generously illustrated with clear half-tone light and electron micrographs and, where useful, fluorescence micrographs. The light micrographs are all of plastic-embedded material. In many instances there is also a small diagram emphasising the important changes. The clinical presentation, course, and prognosis of each condition are given.

There is advice on the indications, contra-indications, complications, and technique of renal biopsy and on the