Metabolic Activities of the Lung. Ciba Foundation Symposium New Series No 78. (Pp 401; illustrated; Dfl.136, about £27.) Excerpta Medica. 1980.

The subject of this symposium is currently attracting much attention and Ciba is once more to be congratulated on both its choice of subject and the calibre of the participants, led on this occasion by JR Vane. The emphasis is on the pulmonary endothelium, especially its role in prostaglandin embolism and in processing circulating amines, peptides, and drugs. Other topics include the structure of slow reacting substances, prostaglandin receptors in the airways, and hormonal influences on lung development. The so-called endocrine cells of the airways get little attention. There is a strong pharmacological slant to the subject but structural detail is well covered. The non-respiratory function of the lung should be of interest to many tissue pathologists, biochemists, and haematologists, and this text is the place to find it all. It is confidently recommended to all interested in how the lungs work or the metabolism of circulating chemical substances.

B CORRIN

Journal of Immunoassay. Vol 1 no 1. (Pp 149; illustrated; four numbers per vol $50.00 per vol, discounted rate for individual professionals $25.00.) Marcel Dekker Inc. 1980.

This new journal is concerned with the rich diversity of assays which retain the original concept of ligand-binder interaction monitored by a tracer associated with either ligand or binder. It is intended as a vehicle for rapid publication of technical developments which may be applicable to assays for many types of substance. The first number includes papers from eight members of the editorial board or their close associates and reflects their widely differing interests. The strength of the editorial team should ensure that the high quality of the first number is maintained in successive issues. This journal is likely to be useful to scientists in many different disciplines.

P MARY COTES

Muir's Textbook of Pathology. 11th ed. Ed JR Anderson. (Pp 1112; illustrated; £19·75.) Edward Arnold. 1980.

The 11th edition of this famous text has appeared just four years after the previous edition. The book is only 66 pages longer than before but this belies the presence of a great deal more information, much of it in the general pathology section. This part of the book, previously extensively revised by Professor Anderson and his colleagues, is further improved and is an excellent source of the basic information that all doctors will need as the foundation of their understanding of disease. The role of experimental work in the elucidation of problems is made clear and the addition of some new line diagrams is helpful in illustrating processes. The reviewer would disagree with the allocation of four pages to chemical and physical carcinogenesis and seven to viral carcinogenesis, a process of probably limited significance in man, but in general this whole segment of the book is thoughtful and well balanced.

The systemic chapters have also been revised and a new section on oral pathology is included. New data are included in many chapters and relatively unimportant items now appear as small print entries.

Side by side comparison of some photomicrographs in the two recent editions suggests that their reproduction contrast has suffered in the new edition but this damage is slight and seldom impairs usefulness.

When asking students about 'Muir' it is interesting to note how many come to value the text more and more as they progress through clinical medicine. I believe this illustrates the care that has been taken in producing a text dealing with principles in pathology in a way which facilitates an understanding of how these principles can be applied to the observations made in the wards. This surely is one of the most important aspects of a student text.

CL BERRY

Manual of Basic Techniques for a Health Laboratory. (Pp 487; illustrated; Swfr 30.) World Health Organization. 1980.

The Manual is a new WHO publication which has been compiled on the basis of experience gained from a previous handbook designed for the use of laboratory assistants in peripheral laboratories who work with minimal supervision. This is a tall order and one can only say that those concerned have succeeded commendably. The manual, clearly written, profusely and simply illustrated, unnecessarily bulky, should be intelligible to anyone of moderate intelligence and limited training and invaluable for class work. SI units could prove a stumbling block and it seems a pity they have to be introduced in such a situation. The maintenance of a laboratory, including simple electrical repairs and plumbing, is fully described together with the collection and despatch of specimens from the peripheral ('health' in the title) to the district laboratory. The many useful simple tests which can be done locally include a considerable amount of parasitology. The book deserves to be made widely available in developing countries.

DS RIDLEY

Electron Microscopy in Human Medicine. Vol 7. Digestive System. (Pp 250; illustrated; £24·20.) McGraw-Hill. 1980.

This volume which is produced in the same beautifully clear and uncluttered layout as the others so far available in the series is divided into three parts. The Oral Cavity and Salivary glands are dealt with by a group of Danish workers from The Royal Dental College, Aarhus. One criticism of this section is that no markers are used on the illustrative micrographs to indicate the exact positions of the structures described. The sections on Gastrointestinal tract and Exocrine Pancreas stem from Dr Toner's group in Glasgow and they give a systematic and clear account of the current state of knowledge of ultrastructure in these fields. Basic research eg on mechanisms of acid secretion from gastric parietal cells and on the functions of Paneth cells has been described in addition to the areas where EM can be truly diagnostic.

This is a good platform of current knowledge with plenty of references to give 'jumping-off points' into more specialised areas and some pointers to areas of possible future investigation.

An indispensable bench book for the histopathologist/electron microscopist.

JULIE CROW