

BOOK REVIEW

Most reviews deal with books just off the press, which publishers send editors for comment and advertisement. This editor is not on the mailing list of publishers, hence the absence of brand-new books in this section. We shall review fairly recent books, in the hope that those who have not had the opportunity to read these books, may want to do so now, especially since books can be acquired through the Book Scheme of the International Union of Biochemistry (the announcement appears elsewhere in this issue). Readers who have a particularly interesting biochemistry book may wish to write a review of it. Pointers on writing book reviews appear in Guidelines for Contributors.

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY OF THE CELL. Bruce Alberts et al. New York:Garland Publishing, Inc. 1983. 1146 pp. of text.

I can think of no more beautiful or elegant way to be introduced to biochemistry than by reading this book. The authors have painstakingly assembled vast amounts of information in molecular biology and developmental biology and packaged them in a readable volume. In their prologue, the authors state how they hope to convey the sense of great mystery surrounding many problems that we do not yet know how to handle, the excitement, logic, and beauty in the study of today's cell biology; and to relate the molecular basis of specific interactions among cellular structures, how a cell grows and divides, how it moves and differentiates, how it participates in the construction of multicellular organisms.

The chapters are arranged in three logically sequenced parts. Part I is the introduction to the cell: cell evolution, small molecules (energy and biosynthesis), macromolecules (structure, shape, and information), and techniques in studying cells. Part II deals with the molecular organization of cells: basic genetic mechanisms, the plasma membrane, internal membranes and the synthesis of macromolecules, the cell nucleus, energy conversion (mitochondria and chloroplasts), the cytoskeleton, cell growth and division, cell-cell adhesion and the extracellular matrix, chemical signalling between cells. Part III traces the development of cells into

multicellular organisms: germ cells and fertilization, cellular mechanisms of development, differentiated cells and the maintenance of tissues, the immune system, the nervous system, special features of plant cells.

The volume is more than adequately illustrated. The reader comes away with the feeling that someone has taken his hand and led him through a walk in Wonderland. The sense of awe and excitement is there.

Molecular Biology of the Cell is a must for teachers of biology and biochemistry. It stands in a class by itself.

- M.A. Santos-Mendigo
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BOOK SCHEME

The International Union of Biochemistry Committee on Education will help departments of biochemistry in obtaining copies of recent textbooks and monographs.

Requests should include a description of the teaching responsibilities of the department concerned, and the basis for the request.

Requests should be addressed to

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