Book reviews

AUTOPSY PATHOLOGY By Philipp R. Rezek and Max Millard. (Pp. xiii + 845; 294 figures. \$24.50.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1963.

It would appear that in some parts of America there has been a tendency in recent years to discredit the value of post-mortem examinations and one of the aims of 'Autopsy Pathology' is to counteract this trend and to promote the restoration of pathological necropsy. The book is intended to help, not only pathologists, but also clinicians in the interpretation of necropsy findings and to assist them in understanding the causes and mode of death.

The first chapter deals with death and dying and one is left with the impression that our knowledge of the mechanisms involved is still very incomplete. The problem of sudden death is discussed but consideration of medical-legal aspects is not attempted.

Under the heading 'Morgue Organisation' there are suggestions for the design and equipping of mortuaries but there is no mention of precautions which should be taken against infection in the post-mortem room.

There is a reasonably detailed description of the points to be observed in the external examination of the body. This is followed by an outline of how a necropsy report should be framed but the busy pathologist would find it difficult to adhere strictly to the somewhat elaborate scheme recommended.

The regions of the body are discussed in turn and the same general arrangement is followed in each. Any anatomical considerations that may have a bearing on pathological changes are mentioned and there is guidance on the removal of the organs from the body and on their subsequent dissection. These descriptions vary in the amount of detail given but are generally adequate, although the reviewer failed to find the instructions on the removal of the thoracic organs *en bloc* which, it is stated in the section on dissection of the heart, are to be found elsewhere. Occasionally the order in which the systems are considered confuses the reader, e.g., the dissection of the trachea is discussed before that of the oesophagus although the oesophagus is, in practice, opened first. Then follow sections on the pathology of the various diseases affecting each organ of the region; a description of the naked-eye changes is given but findings on microscopy are not considered. The emphasis is on the commoner and more important conditions but the less common are also mentioned. Useful advice is given on special points to be looked for and on the significance of the changes seen.

The authors have combined in the writing of each chapter and the result is that the book has a uniform style which is easy to read. A selected list of references has been included; many of these are to recent publications and an appreciable proportion are from British sources. The illustrations are clear and informative and the index satisfactory. The volume is well produced.

Although the book is not one which can replace

standard works on pathology it contains useful information not often found together in one volume. It is, however, not inexpensive.

P. D. STEWART

IRON METABOLISM By Thomas H. Bothwell and Clement A. Finch. (Pp. 440; illustrated. £5 7s. 6d.) London: J. & A. Churchill. 1962.

This book, written by two leading workers is the most lucid and up-to-date account of iron metabolism now available. Anyone concerned with the more difficult problems of iron deficiency or iron overload needs to read this book and to have it available for reference.

The two clinical chapters are at the end and deal with iron deficiency and iron overload in 134 pages which omit nothing of importance, and are notable for the simple and straightforward exposition of the many factors involved. Even rarities such as idiopathic pulmonary haemosiderosis and the sideroblastic hypochromic anaemias are clearly analysed.

The first two chapters deal with techniques, cytological, chemical, and isotopic, and the information which they can provide. Chapters on the factors affecting iron balance, on iron transport, storage and utilization, and on the production of erythrocytes follow, and provide the backdrop against which the clinical chapters are to be read. Though in some ways more complicated, these chapters are just as clear as are the clinical chapters.

This book is also a pleasure to read. The literary style is not distinguished, but it is simple and clear so that it should be easily understood by those whose language of the hearth is not English as easily as by those who speak English from the cradle.

GEORGE DISCOMBE

CENTRAL STERILE SUPPLY Published for the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust. (Pp. xiv + 123; 54 figures; appendices and plans. 25s.) London: Oxford University Press. 1963.

The central sterile supply system is now being widely adopted in Britain following the work of V. D. Allison and E. M. Darmady. British hospitals have special problems and opportunities in this field and there is need for a British treatise about it. This book answers that need. It is based on work in the experimental department at the United Cambridge Hospitals but also embodies observations from elsewhere. Being about a rapidly advancing subject, it inevitably is not wholly up to date nor free from some details for criticism. Nevertheless, it is a valuable work and gives a comprehensive, clear, and well-illustrated account of organization and technique. Many matters are dealt with, including accommodation, apparatus, work-flow, cost, transport, the wrapping and contents of packs, and sketch plans of existing and projected departments in various hospitals. Reasons for adopting particular methods are often stated, and even if