many recent advances in renal pathology. The plan of the book is virtually the same as its predecessor, with chapters on the general aspects and limitations of renal biopsy, the normal kidney, nephrotic syndrome, glomerulonephritis, diabetic lesions, pyelonephritis, hypertension, and miscellaneous conditions. The need for thin, good quality sections is emphasized and the inclusion of a short appendix describing the technical methods used in Birmingham is, therefore, particularly welcome.

The chapter on the nephrotic syndrome has been enlarged to include discussion of some of the results of the recent MRC trial. There are good descriptions of membrano-proliferative and 'minimal change' glomerulonephritis, and reference is made to the newly developed methods of quantitative morphometry which are clearly going to become increasingly important in assessing the presence or absence of minor degrees of glomerular hypercellularity and, in particular, in distinguishing between 'minimal change' lesions and proliferative glomerulonephritis.

As in the first edition the text contains many very instructive case histories (all of which have been brought right up to date), and is illustrated by good quality photomicrographs. It is a great pity that a few well chosen electron micrographs have not been included and, also, that immunofluorescent techniques and their results receive only the very briefest of mention.

The book is well produced and reasonably priced and can be recommended as a sound guide in a somewhat confused and confusing field of histopathology.

R. C. B. PUGH

Blood Disorders due to Drugs and Other Agents Edited by Ronald H. Girdwood. (Pp. 281; illustrated. Dfl. 72.00.) Amsterdam: Excerpta Medica. 1973.

This book deals mainly with the haematological side effects of drugs, the other agents being benzene and irradiation each of which is dealt with in a separate chapter.

The contributors are all expert in their particular fields and, as would be expected, much detail is given, particularly with regard to metabolic pathways by which certain drugs are thought to cause their effects.

The topics included cover a very wide

range of haematological dyscrasias: drug-induced haemolysis, the effects of drugs on enzyme-deficient erythrocytes and the haemoglobinopathies, drug-induced megaloblastosis, aplasia, and chloramphenicol toxicity. The remaining chapters are devoted to agranulocytosis, thrombocytopenia (accompanied by a formidable list of causative agents), and thrombocytopathy.

A useful review of the bleeding complications of anticoagulant therapy is also included.

The book is well produced and eminently readable. Clear illustrations are included, and the references given are both copious and accurate. As an introduction, Professor Girdwood writes a succinct account of the numerous pitfalls from whence may stem an undesirable drug effect, in particular 'iatrogenic' causes. (It would be interesting to know whether intramuscular Coca-Cola for the treatment of anaemia, described under 'unethical conduct', has been found to be efficacious!)

The book will prove invaluable to haematologists and also to physicians faced with problems possibly related to therapy, and there is an excellent index for cross reference in which very many drugs are listed. The book is therefore strongly recommended, although it is perhaps a little expensive

H. MACD. CLINK

Medico Legal Investigation of Death

Edited by Werner U. Spitz and Russell S. Fisher. (Pp. xvii + 536; illustrated. \$24.75.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1973.

This is a large, glossy, brand new textbook of forensic pathology from the United States. As the dust cover says, 'this authoritative text is oriented to the homicide investigator and the novice forensic pathologist and embraces all aspects of the pathology of trauma as it is witnessed daily by law enforcement officers, interpreted by pathologists of varying experiences in forensic pathology . . .'. It is written by 14 contributors, all of whom are obviously writing from extensive first-hand experience and there will be few pathologists who will not find in it some aspect of violence new to them. The text is very practical, and is mainly concerned with violent death and the interpretation of postmortem findings; there is little about the theoretical aspects

of forensic medicine and some of the more problematic subjects, such as the diagnosis of asphyxia, are rather sketched around.

An outstanding feature is the vast number of photographs. They are detailed, well produced, and quite revolting. From decomposed children in refrigerators to men in chains and women's clothing, nothing is spared. After a little while one begins to think that perhaps Casper was justified when in his famous 19th century textbook he refused to describe certain 'unnatural forms of lewdness', writing: 'the sacred interests of science would justify me in more minutely describing what I have learned as to these matters, but the still more sacred interests of morality forbid me to enlarge upon them.' In this book they would not only be described but probably photographed as well. Most of the illustrations are accompanied by a potted case history which often seems only to add morbid interest rather than to illustrate any principle and confirms the sometimes voiced criticism that forensic pathology is more anecdotal than scientific. However, perhaps we should accept the statement of the writer of the foreword: 'we should not faint at the photos here. They are true and while all truth may not seem beauty, all truth can strengthen our humanity.' Nevertheless, although a photograph of a middle-aged chronic alcoholic dentist sitting naked and dead in his dental chair, having bled to death from an accidental cut on his head, may perhaps strengthen one's humanity, it does not add much to scientific knowledge.

Overstatement of the obvious is one of the pitfalls of the characteristic thoroughness of the American approach, and makes this book heavy going. Many of the deductions made in forensic pathology are a matter of straightforward common sense but others depend upon the sheer weight of experience. One way to gain experience is to read of the experience of others and if only for this reason, the book is of undoubted importance to practising forensic pathologists.

A. C. HUNT