BOOK REVIEWS

Practical Haematology, 2nd ed. By J. V. Dacie. (Pp. vii+229; 43 figures. 20s.) London: J. & A. Churchill. 1956.

This book ranges from a guide to student technicians about to take their final examination on haematology to one which can be regarded as an up-to-date practical laboratory guide for all grades of hospital laboratory workers. An amazing amount of detail is included and there is virtually no padding. The accent throughout is on tried and proven technical methods, and repeated warnings are given against accepting results without full knowledge of the normal variations in health and the limit of error in the technique.

Although the ranges for absolute values are given, the term "absolute value" is deliberately placed between inverted commas and a warning is given against any delusion of absoluteness.

Outstanding in the whole book are the chapters on the tests for investigating cases of haemolytic anaemia and clotting defects, and these bring the reader right up to date. On the other hand, the chapter on miscellaneous tests is naturally disjointed and rather brief. One minor criticism only occurs to the reviewer, and that is the rather large number of references in a work of this character; 62 references occupying three and a half pages to a chapter on haemolytic anaemias seems over-generous, and even the last mixed chapter of eight pages has 26 references. The book maintains the high technical standard of J. & A. Churchill and is deservedly already the standard textbook on practical haematology in this country. At 20s. it is wonderful value.

A. GORDON SIGNY.

Vascular Patterns as Related to Function. Second Conference on Microcirculatory Physiology and Pathology, Philadelphia, April 5, 1955. (Pp. 136; 55 figures. 20s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox. 1955.

This small book reports, in the manner which is now so familiar, a meeting between a group of people with basically similar interests in the blood flow in small vessels. The discussion which follows each paper is rather more formal than is usual, and perhaps this is no loss.

Most of the papers deal with direct observations on the blood flow in vessels, mainly using techniques which have been elaborated particularly by E. R. Clark (the chamber technique) and Melvin Knisely (the quartz rod technique).

The type of investigation which is reported in these papers is as yet in its infancy, and it seems certain

that a great mass of new observations, which can be obtained in no other way, will eventually be made by the use of these methods.

This book, and the report of the previous conference, can be wholeheartedly recommended to all who are interested in the circulation, either normal or pathological. The field is little studied by the clinical pathologist, but it is unlikely that anyone could put down this book without having had to revise his outlook on various points of the pathology of the circulation.

P. M. DANIEL.

The Biliary Tract: With Special Reference to the Common Bile Duct, 1st ed. By Julian A. Sterling. (Pp. ix+424; 94 figures, 2 coloured plates. 80s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox. 1955.

This is a book written by a surgeon who obviously has a vast experience of his subject, and it will appeal primarily to surgeons. This is not to say that it has no interest for pathologists, for the pages are full of facts and refreshing ideas which will stimulate any medical reader. Indeed it is particularly useful for pathologists to be able to view the problems through the eyes of a surgeon who has so often been confronted with the diagnostic and therapeutic problems peculiar to the biliary tract, the liver, and the pancreas.

The author sets out to review present knowledge and hypotheses in the classical sequence of anatomy, physiology, and pathology, continuing with chapters on the clinical manifestations, laboratory observations, medical management, anaesthesia, and some 120 pages on details of surgical treatment. There is a useful chapter on radiology, and the radiographic reproductions are above the normal standard. In the section on anatomy there are five pages of possible anomalies, but the role of ammonia in acute yellow atrophy is not mentioned in the chapter on pathology. It is interesting to see a special section on the post-cholecystectomy syndrome and another on bile peritonitis. In tune with his essentially practical approach Mr. Sterling has good advice to offer to pathologists on the advisability of adequate fixation before fine dissection of the biliary tract can be undertaken.

The chapters on pathology and laboratory observations are sound, and they are extensive for a book written from a surgical point of view. The photomicrographs are not very satisfactory, but the coloured plates are entertaining. There are aphorisms which must surely please the clinical pathologist: "One good feel of the liver is worth two liver function tests" is followed by "Laboratory findings