Book reviews

BLEEDING DISORDERS—INVESTIGATION AND MANAGEMENT
In this book the authors have set out to provide a guide to both clinicians and haematologists who encounter a patient who is bleeding abnormally. By doing this they have provided a very useful addition to the medical literature in a practical book complementary to the existing but more academic monographs on the subject of blood coagulation.

A short theoretical introduction is followed by a description of the types of abnormal clinical bleeding that may be encountered in various haemorrhagic states. Then follows a guide as to the tests that should be used for diagnosis and the rationale for their use (the actual techniques are given in a comprehensive technical appendix and cross reference is made in the text). The life-long or inherited bleeding disorders and their treatment are next described.

The acquired abnormalities receive deserved emphasis. The present growing interest in defibrination syndromes is stressed by a very comprehensive description of the mechanism, clinical states, and their treatment. The risks of producing abnormal bleeding by massive blood transfusion are discussed, together with the complications of incompatible blood transfusion, and the modern problem of cardiac-pulmonary bypass techniques and post-perfusion bleeding are also included.

Natural and acquired anticoagulants, vitamin K deficiency, and the purpuras are described, and the final large chapter contains a detailed list of those laboratory methods that have been mentioned in the text.

A comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography is given.

This book should be read by clinician and laboratory workers alike: it will educate the beginner whether he be an aspiring physician or haematologist, stimulate those who think they know all about this subject to think again on many points that the authors have discussed, and provide a useful reference or bench book for use in everyday practice.

The what to do and how to do it in this book cannot be faulted except where the reader may have minor differences of opinion. The layout is somewhat sectional and thus annoying as there has been too much use of cross references, some of which are wrong. At times one feels the authors could with advantage have been more dogmatic.

In discussing the taking of a clinical history of bleeding, some guide as to how to assess the amount of blood lost from a given site would have improved this section. A more detailed description of how snake venoms activate clotting should have been given; for instance, heparin has no effect on the action of the Malayan pit viper venom and thus cannot be used to neutralize its action. Amongst the laboratory methods one finds certain techniques and details of technique included which would not be the choice of other workers in this field.

These criticisms are of course of minor importance in relation to the overall value of this book. The presentation by the publishers is up to their usual high standard and at the price this is good value for money.

A. A. Sharp

NUTRITIONAL ASPECTS OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES
The author of this short monograph describes, in the preface, his purpose as being an attempt 'to integrate the complex nutritional physio-pathology with related structural and functional derangements of the cardiovascular system'. The book undoubtedly owes its inspiration to Hans Selye, who contributes a highly laudatory foreword. Selye's work on the production of cardiomyopathies in rats by manipulations of sodium and chloride intake and administration of hormone preparations forms the starting point for elaborate theorizing on the dietetic and stress relationships of heart disease in man. The somewhat wordy style frequently occasions some difficulty in disentangling factual observations from pure conjecture.

In spite of these drawbacks, the monograph has value in drawing attention to mechanisms of heart muscle necrosis other than ischaemia.

T. Crawford

CARDIOVASCULAR PATHOLOGY
By R. E. B. Hudson. (Pp. (Vols. 1 and 2) 3313; illustrated. £21.) London: Edward Arnold.
What an astonishing magnum opus this is! A one-man compilation which runs to over 3,000 pages, with every section heavily documented by references to the literature, represents a staggering amount of labour which inevitably commands our admiration. Having undertaken the stupendous task of writing a one-man reference book on the pathology of the cardiovascular system (perhaps the most written-about system in medicine) the author seems almost to have thrown discretion to the winds and misses no opportunity to lengthen the volumes by yet a page or two more. There is, for instance, included under the heading of 'The cardiac necropsy', quite a full account of general post-mortem room technique, and a little later we come on to half a dozen pages devoted to the photography, preservation, and mounting of museum specimens.

The section on the aetiology of bacterial endocarditis regales us with the splendid statement that 'staphylococci are Gram-positive spherical organisms which grow in clusters', and there is interpolated at this point almost a miniature textbook of microbiology with an account of all the microorganisms which are capable of setting up this infection. Similarly, there are considerable accounts of blood coagulation and the fibrinolytic processes and their disturbances, of electrolyte balance and its upsets, lipid metabolism and glycogen metabolism, to mention