REVIEWS

An Introduction to Pathology. By G. Payling Wright. 1950. London: Longmans, Green. Illustrated. Pp. 569. Price 30s.

There has been a serious need for such a book as this for the last quarter of a century, and it is most gratifying to discover that it has at last been written by an author with so wide a knowledge of the scientific aspect of pathology and so outstanding a talent for accurate generalization. It is planned to give the student an adequate understanding of the basic mechanisms which underlie disease processes. It deals with the principles of pathology in terms of the more fundamental sciences of biology and physiology. Every opportunity is taken to put life into the static facts of morbid anatomy and histology by blending them with the discoveries of modern biology, physiology, experimental pathology, and immunology. Pathogenesis is heavily emphasized and the story of pathology is told in lucid and distinguished English against the background of time. So skilfully has this been done that Professor Payling Wright will undoubtedly earn the gratitude, not only of the junior clinical student for whom the book was written, but also of those of us who undertake the difficult task of teaching general pathology.

The introduction is an impressive piece of writing. It consists for the most part of an account of the history of pathology in terms of the evolution of science and has the same dynamic quality as the rest of the book. Other outstanding chapters are those dealing with the body's defences against infection, the inheritance of abnormalities, haemorrhage, thrombosis, and the aetiology of tumours. The references, which cover an uncommonly wide field, are wisely selected, and of the 250 well-chosen illustrations more than half are photomicrographs and all are of high standard.

Professor Payling Wright's book has several qualities which will ensure its success. It is remarkably free from prejudice and dogmatism; it is easy to read, well balanced, and small in size, but above all it is inspiring.

GEOFFREY HADFIELD.

Disorders of the Blood. By Sir Lionel Whitby and C. J. C. Britton. 1950. London: J. and A. Churchill, Ltd. Sixth edition. Illustrated. Pp. 759. Price 42s.

The appearance of the new "Whitby and Britton" in its sixth edition will be widely welcomed. It has been considerably altered in many respects, and includes an extensive revision of certain chapters to include much newer work on pigment metabolism, the mechanics of coagulation, and haemagglutination. It is only four years since the last edition, but these years have been filled with a vast and growing literature in both the clinical and laboratory aspects of haematology. Such new advances as the treatment of pernicious anaemia with B₁₂, intravenous iron therapy, folic acid metabolism, and the use of tracer elements are all of vital importance to the haematologist. The detailed study of blood groups and subgroups has also provided greatly increased knowledge in a far from stabilized field of investigation.

It is difficult when bringing a textbook up to date to know exactly which new work to include as acceptable, and which fairly to omit, and withal to keep a balanced view of the newer pathology. The authors have managed remarkably well to present in the revised chapters such a balance. The new additions on the absorption and excretion of iron give a much clearer view of the method by which the iron radicle is utilized and of its storage and metabolism, and the diagram illustrating the processes involved is more than useful. The chapter on pernicious anaemia is particularly helpful, and presents an up-to-date picture of the pathology and treatment of the condition. The information on blood coagulation and the haemorrhagic diseases is well arranged, and Macfarlane's table on the factors involved in coagulation enables the reader to follow the discussion with ease.

Nearly 100 pages at the end of the book are devoted to a description of technical methods, and here again some revision has improved a most useful guide for the laboratory worker.

It is most encouraging to the editors of this journal to see such an extensive use made of the material published in it during the past two years, with references to many of the recent papers published here. The references throughout are very adequate, and yet they never intrude upon the reader. Some of the new plates are excellent, especially those of the bone marrow where reference to the key identifying the individual cell is immediately accessible. Other new plates are, however, not of the standard which we expect in this textbook. The new colour plates 6, 9, and 11 (i) show entirely different colour from the older plates, and are not an accurate representation of the normally used staining methods. Comparing plate 5 (p. 45) with its counterpart, plate 3, in the previous edition, neither colour nor details, particularly of the reticulocyte, compare favourably with the earlier illustrations. (It is possible that this occurred only in the reviewer's copy.) It is also rather disturbing to find evidence of uncertain sub-editing in the use of those abbreviations which have become standard in scientific literature. It is to be hoped that reprints or any new editions will remove the indiscriminate use of the abbreviations "g," "gm," "mg," and "mgm." This is particularly striking in some pages—e.g., on page 138 where line two refers to "3.34 mg. of iron," and, thereafter, in consecutive lines refers to "26 mgm. of iron." Similarly page 635 refers to "0.5 gram" and "0.15 gram," and a little further down uses "25 g. of Na_2HPO_4 ," whereas two pages later, in the method for peroxidase staining, we are told to "rub 0.2 gm. of benzidine." These minor irritations could be removed by a little careful sub-editing.

Only one criticism remains, which it is hoped the authors will face in their next edition, and that is the vexed question of the colour index. It seems a pity to perpetuate this measurement in the light of many of the remarks made in this and other publications, which leads to the conflicting use of the term "hyperchromic anaemia" in the classification of the anaemias and in the discussion. The nomenclature is later attacked on page 58, where the term "hyperchromic" is called "misleading." As the index is based on two percentage figures, neither of which is in any way relevant, the index itself must frequently be misleading and has outlived its usefulness. There is really no more point in referring to the percentage of haemoglobin than to the percentage of urea in the blood, or the percentage of blood pressure over a stated average normal. There is no doubt

that students and clinicians must be trained in the use of the new terminology, and be taught to think in terms of haemoglobin in g.%, but as long as the old method of reporting is perpetuated in Whitby and Britton, there can be no universal change-over.

It is impossible to consider in any greater detail the rest of the book. It is sufficient to say that the authors have used their judgment well in maintaining the old, and introducing new, subject matter, and that this book, already the standard "blood book" in this and many other countries, has worthily consolidated its position with this new edition.

A. GORDON SIGNY.

Practical Haematology. By J. V. Dacie, M.B., B.S.(Lond.), M.R.C.P.(Lond.). Pp. 172. Illustrated. London. J. and A. Churchill, Ltd. Price 10s. 6d.

We should like to welcome this new handbook of practical haematology, which is a product of the Department of Clinical Pathology at the British Post-Graduate Medical School in London.

It is based on practical notes for students and is an admirable laboratory book for pathologists and technicians in training.

The author makes no attempt to set down elaborate techniques, nor does he duplicate the methods, as this is essentially a practical handbook of standard methods used in a routine laboratory. The approach to the subject is logical and direct, and it is encouraging to see such a positive view taken of the value and limitation of laboratory investigations, as it is particularly the beginners in laboratory work who tend to place so much reliance on results which have an intrinsic error. This excellence is well illustrated in, for example, the short section on the red cell count (p. 36) which could with advantage be distributed from every laboratory to clinicians who tend to rely on small variations in the red cell count as a guide to progress and prognosis. Throughout the book all the methods described have been thoroughly tested, and the book will no doubt be widely used by students entering for the haematology examination of the Institute of Laboratory Technology.

The author has resisted any temptation to become too theoretical but the reason for each