specialisation has continued, a book that encompasses the entire field of pathology is unlikely to be as popular as a single-discipline treatise directed at experts in that discipline.

Although the book is expensive it is eminently readable, the more general chapters on the evaluation of methods in clinical chemistry and the place of the computer in medical bacteriology and the chapter on shared clinical laboratories being perhaps more generally useful for the specialist reader. The latter chapter is of particular interest should the potentially wider exploitation of private practice in Great Britain become a reality.

G. W. PENNINGTON

Microbiology. Molecules, Microbes and Man. 2nd edition. By Eugene W. Nester, C. Evans Roberts, Nancy N. Pearsall and Brian J. McCarthy. (Pp. xii + 769; illustrated; £10.00.) Eastbourne, Sussex: Holt Rinehart and Winston. 1978.

Reviewing textbooks designed for American undergraduates is usually something of a chore as they seldom come anywhere near to what we expect for our medical students. This one is different. Apart from the inevitable idiosyncrasies of spelling (mold, ameba—though the glossary allows amoeba—sulfa) and an understandable dwelling on things American (I did not know that Frau Hesse, who was responsible for the introduction of agar, came from New Jersey) I found much that I teach, and quite a bit more that I liked. This arises from the fact that the authors clearly have the needs of preclinical students of medicine and 'health-related fields' in mind.

The book has five main parts. The first, 'Foundations of Microbial Life', although it includes material taught either at school or in preclinical departments of physiology or biochemistry in the UK, also includes much that I teach preclinical students, neither falling below nor exceeding requirements. I found the chapters on bacterial anatomy, growth, metabolism, and genetics particularly good.

Part II, 'The Microbial World', also contains much that is relevant and little that is irrelevant to the preclinical student. The descriptions of bacteria are brief and shorn of most technical detail, and those of medical importance are distinguished in an Appendix.

Part III, 'Microbes and Human Beings' (perhaps 'Man' is no longer permissible), takes up almost one-third of the book.

The aim is to illustrate ideas rather than produce a comprehensive treatise on infection, and one should not be surprised that *Streptobacillus moniliformis* and its L-forms has as much space as *Staph. aureus*. The book is, after all, not aiming to provide teaching on the diagnosis and management of infection. A welcome innovation in a book of this kind is the consideration of pathogens under the headings of the diseases that they cause, which is the way many medical teachers now approach the subject. Once again, British students may find offensive the elementary anatomy that introduces some of the sections. The chapters on epidemiology and antimicrobial agents were among the few that I found inadequate.

The remaining sections on 'The Environment' and 'The Continuing Frontier' are not strictly relevant to the medical undergraduate but provide interesting collateral reading.

In conclusion, I commend this book to the attention of those who teach pre-clinical medical students. Even if our students cannot afford to buy the book individually, it could usefully be given space on library shelves.

I. PHILLIPS

British Medical Bulletin, Volume 34, No. 2, 1978. 'Thrombosis'. Scientific editor Duncan Thomas. (Pp. 101-212; illustrated; £5.00.) London. The British Council. 1978.

'Thrombosis' follows the recent issue on 'Haemostasis', and the two provide an excellent and up-to-date review of all major topics in this complex field. The issue on 'Thrombosis' combines successfully the biochemistry and pathology of thrombosis in the first seven papers, with the clinical, diagnostic, pharmacological, and epidemiological aspects in the remaining eight articles. This Bulletin is a useful addition to any postgraduate library and of major importance to those in the field of thrombosis, for whom it provides up-to-date references and competent summaries of current views.

M. BROZOVIC

Chelation Therapy in Chronic Iron Overload. Edited by Edward C. Zaino and Richard H. Roberts. (Pp. x + 148; illustrated; \$17.95.) Miami: Symposia Specialists. 1977.

These papers and discussions from a one-day conference held in New York in May 1977 reflect a renewed hope that

toxicity from chronic iron overload, particularly in the thalassaemia disorders, may be preventable. Several participants show that prolonged intravenous or subcutaneous infusions of the iron chelator desferrioxamine give much more effective negative iron balance than intramuscular injections. The reported studies of possible clinical benefits and hazards of intensive chelation with desferrioxamine rely mainly on cardiac function tests and are very preliminary. It is clear, however, that at present there is no oral iron-chelating agent likely to match parenteral desferrioxamine. It is therefore disappointing in a symposium co-sponsored by the manufacturers, CIBA, to find no hint of work on more practical alternatives (such as a slow release preparation of the drug) to replace the chronic use of a subcutaneous infusion pump. Much of the data has since been published elsewhere, limiting the book's value even for those working in this field.

M. J. PIPPARD

Atlas of Neonatal Histopathology. By A. Moragas, A. Ballabriga, and Maria Teresa Vidal. Translated by A. Valdes-Dapena, M. A. Valdes-Dapena and N. B. Saunders. (Pp. xv + 238; illustrated £43.75.) Philadelphia, London, Toronto: W. B. Saunders. 1978.

This is a superbly produced volume based on 3000 necropsies on neonates in Barcelona. All of the 376 illustrations are well chosen colour photomicrographs of very high technical quality. They are each accompanied by a concise informative case-history, which has clearly lost nothing in translation by the Valdes-Dapenas. The range of material presented is very comprehensive and includes much that is relevant to the postneonatal period of childhood. The placenta is omitted as are those subjects like malformations of the heart, which are not suitable for illustration by photomicrographs. Both the pictures and the text clearly indicate an underlying very high standard of clinical and pathological practice.

Unlike many atlases, the book is of convenient size to go on library shelves. At the sale price it will clearly remain a connoisseur's item. This is a pity as it has much to offer the trainee and, indeed, many items of interest to the experts in this field.

A. H. CAMERON