

Reviews

COLON AND RECTUM

The Surgery of the Colon and Rectum. By Sir Hugh Devine, M.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.A.C.S., F.A.C.S., and John Devine, M.S., F.R.C.S., F.R.A.C.S., F.A.C.S. (Pp. 373; 277 illustrations (some in colour). 52s. 6d.) Bristol: John Wright and Sons. 1948.

The work of Sir Hugh Devine in advancing the surgery of the large bowel is already well known. With John Devine as a collaborator in writing this new book he offers all the wisdom which a wide experience of this realm of surgery has developed in an alert and inventive surgeon. We believe this to be an important book which will be highly valued and appreciated by operators both young and old.

Perhaps the outstanding lesson of these pages is that the mortality of colonic operations could be reduced considerably if the bowel were "defunctioned" by an adequate colostomy and chemotherapeutically prepared to reduce possible infection to a minimum. This is, of course, no more than a reiteration of the teachings of Paul and Mikulicz, but the technique has been improved by performing a more perfectly designed colostomy followed by local use of the insoluble sulphonamides. The results recorded here show that these modifications are of real value, and a large part of the book is about the practical application of the technique to various diseases of the colon and rectum. The authors describe the useful Devine operating frame; it is a great help in providing the extensive exposures necessary in this branch of surgery. Another device described is an ingenious pump for the direct transfusion of blood, a procedure now rarely used in Britain.

It is interesting to read that appendicostomy is revived as a treatment for some cases of ulcerative colitis when combined with the use of sulphonamides, although colectomy, partial or complete, by the new technique is performed for most cases. In the treatment of Hirschsprung's disease, too, the authors recommend total colectomy; the results of sympathectomy in these cases "afford little encouragement to continue its use." Not all surgeons would agree. Incidentally, we found the arguments about the experimental work on the autonomic control of the colon rather ambiguous in that the experiments showing that the lower bowel receives a motor (accelerator) supply from the parasympathetic are adduced as evidence against performing sympathectomy, whereas it would seem logically to be evidence in favour, at least if the conception of an antagonism of the two sides of the autonomic supply is accepted. The phraseology here and there sounds rather unusual to the English ear, and the occasional use of such words as "ectropionises" would raise a cry of despair from our purists. The book is well produced, of handy size, and copiously illustrated. We can highly recommend it.

NORMAN C. LAKE.

QUICK DIAGNOSIS OF TUMOURS

Identification of Tumors. Essential Gross and Microscopic Pathologic Features Systematically Arranged for Easier Identification. By N. Chandler Foot, M.D. (Pp. 397; 241 illustrations. 36s.) Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company.

The motive behind this book is good; it is intended to be a vade-mecum for the microscopist, providing a quick diagnostic aid in much the same way as a botanist uses a pocket flora in the field. Without preambles about general theory, classifications, carcinogens, and so forth, the author goes straight to the description of types. Part I is on tumours of general distribution, Part II on those of special systems and organs. In each type described there are brief notes under side-headings in bold type indicating the source, site, clinical features, pathology, and differential diagnosis. The illustrative photomicrographs are abundant, but could be better interpreted if the stains used and the magnifications were stated. Technical notes and a tabulated arrangement of the tumours described are appended.

Attractively set out, this book would achieve its objective but for the presence of far too many statements to which exception may be taken. Thus (p. 208), the author gives the normal weight of a parathyroid as 3 g.; he states that carcinoma of the gall-bladder is extremely rare (p. 158); he lists the ileum (p. 144) as a site of adenocarcinoma, which is admitted to be less often so than the colon, but presumably not the excessively rare phenomenon which in fact it is generally considered to be. Apart from the malignant argentaffinoma, primary epithelial malignant tumours of the ileum are virtually unknown. Further instances of this kind could be added. There are also serious omissions. For instance, to take a few at random, the author does not mention the common endochondromata of the phalanges, whereas he gives pride of place to those of the articular cartilages—an unlikely site. In describing primary carcinoma of the liver (p. 154) he does not mention its common association with cirrhosis. He states that carcinoma of the bronchus (p. 111) metastasizes to the bones, suprarenals, spleen, and kidneys, but does not add the brain, liver, and pancreas, which are so commonly involved, nor does he mention on p. 129 the interesting sex differences in the distribution of carcinoma of the oesophagus.

The author's use of words, too, is often puzzling. Thus the term "metaplasia" appears both where one would expect "metaplasia" and also where most pathologists would say "anaplasia." It is to be feared that the student would find this book difficult to use in conjunction with the teaching of other textbooks.

DOROTHY S. RUSSELL.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs and Symptoms. Their Clinical Interpretation. Edited by Cyril Mitchell MacBryde, A.B., M.D., F.A.C.P. Second impression. (Pp. 439; 74 illustrations in black and white and 12 subjects in colour on 6 plates. £3 12s.) Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1948.

The recent development of laboratory and radiological methods of diagnosis has not diminished the need for expert clinicians. Useful though special tests are, they must be interpreted in relation to the patient's history and the findings on clinical examination, which remain as much as ever the keystone of medical practice. In MacBryde's own words: "... even to-day the accomplished physician can learn more in the majority of cases from what the patient says, and the way he says it, than from any other avenue of inquiry." In making a clinical assessment there are certain symptoms and signs which claim our attention because of their frequent occurrence and significance. This work is a collection of 26 articles, each on an important symptom or sign, from a team of distinguished contributors. The work is excellent. By confining their attention to a few topics the authors have been able to discuss them fully, and there are a few of us who could read this book without gaining a better understanding of phenomena that we encounter daily.

Where it strikes an original note is that the authors summarize the results of experimental work on their subjects and then describe the processes concerned in the production of the particular symptom or sign. In other words, they have shown how clinical observations may yield information about the disturbed physiological processes of which symptoms and signs are the overt manifestations. Clinical medicine continues to advance not because we observe more exactly than older clinicians but because we are able to relate our observations to more precise scientific knowledge than was available to them, a circumstance well illustrated by this book.

Some of the articles are outstandingly good. That on headache by H. G. Wolff is largely derived from his own original studies and is admirable. MacBryde's article on dehydration presents in simple terms the modern conception of water and salt balance, and it is matched by an equally clear account of oedema by Wood and Sylvester. In his essay on sore mouth and sore tongue Vilter shows the refreshing effect of pouring the new wine of scientific research into one of the oldest bottles of clinical medicine. But all the articles are interesting and it is perhaps invidious to mention any specifically. The production is as good as the contents deserve, so that the reading of this book yields a double pleasure.

SIDNEY TRUELOVE.