

attempt at clarification and integration; for instance, the brief section on electromyography could do little more than confuse the uninformed reader. Furthermore, it abounds in dogmatic statements based upon impression and personal opinion rather than upon scientifically valid evidence. For example, one reads that "in complete penetration of the gene of dystrophia myotonica, oligophrenia appears." And in considering the vexed question of the relationship between dystrophia myotonica, paramyotonia, and myotonia congenita the author rightly stresses the differences in natural history between the three conditions, but it is difficult to see upon what evidence he bases his categorical assertion that they are entirely different diseases, as his own series includes no cases of myotonia congenita. In a long discussion of pharmacology and treatment it is suggested that growth hormone and insulin may be of value, but this advice appears to rest upon the uncontrolled observation of improvement in a single case. Despite these criticisms one must pay tribute to the author's industry, for the book contains much useful information and will be a valuable source of reference, as most of the important facets of this group of conditions receive detailed consideration.

JOHN N. WALTON.

BRITISH SURGICAL PROGRESS

British Surgical Practice. Surgical Progress, 1956. Under the general editorship of Sir Ernest Rock Carling, LL.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.C.P., F.F.R., and Sir James Paterson Ross, K.C.V.O., M.S., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S. (Pp. 396+vii; illustrated. 47s. 6d.) London: Butterworth and Co. Ltd. 1956.

This is the annual supplement to *British Surgical Practice* for the year 1956. As in previous years, the volume consists of original articles, critical surveys, and abstracts. The articles deal with a variety of subjects, the first and longest being an account of spontaneous intracranial haemorrhage by J. M. Potter. Other subjects comprise cancer of the maxilla, atresia of the oesophagus, repair of the cardia, some plastic procedures, distribution of paralysis in poliomyelitis, rectal prolapse, parotitis, traumatic paraplegia, congenital deformities of the thorax, and transplantation of the ureters into the ileum. Of the critical surveys, the most important is that by C. F. Scurr and G. S. W. Organe on hypothermic anaesthesia, in which the advantages and dangers of that procedure are well indicated. The abstracts cover a wide ground and are of varying importance; I wish it might have been possible to include details of the technique used in resection of abdominal aneurysms. Altogether the whole volume will be of great assistance to busy surgeons who are trying to keep up to date with the latest advances.

ZACHARY COPE.

COAGULATION DEFECTS

The Laboratory Diagnosis of Coagulation Defects. By Pietro de Nicola, M.D. (Pp. 240+xv; illustrated. 57s. 6d.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1956.

This further monograph in the American Lecture Series maintains the high standards of many of its predecessors. It is written by a recognized authority on haemorrhagic disorders and blood coagulation, and he has succeeded in presenting his material in a format suitable not only for the laboratory worker in this field but also for clinicians, physiologists, and pathologists with a less specialized interest. The publication of this book is timely; the number of papers on blood coagulation in recent years is enormous, and each is written in a terminology peculiar to one group of workers. The resulting confusion has in some measure been reduced by this particular account of the subject.

The book contains five chapters, the first on the physiological basis of the laboratory tests, while Chapters II and III deal with the application of these to the diagnosis of haemorrhagic syndromes. Chapter IV enumerates the technical details of each of the tests. Useful diagrams help the reader to follow the description of these technical procedures. On page 63 the term "adsorbed serum" in the account of the thromboplastin generation test should read

"serum". Chapter V summarizes the author's conclusions. The bibliography at the end is good, but a little difficult immediately to follow, being divided into parts, each with a series of numbers, covering individual sections of the book.

A. S. DOUGLAS.

HEALING OF WOUNDS

The Mechanisms of Healing in Human Wounds. By Shattuck W. Hartwell, B.S., M.S., M.D., Ph.D., F.A.C.S., F.I.C.S. (Pp. 166+xii; illustrated. 34s.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1955.

This monograph presents a practising surgeon's mature conclusions on the healing of wounds. Over the past 30 years the author has made numerous experimental and clinical studies of this subject, and these are summarized here in a readable and attractive form. The approach is teleological and qualitative, and though the style is discursive this is not inappropriate in a monograph.

On the basis of extensive histological studies of human wounds in various stages of healing, the author draws attention to the difference between repair of human skin and that of animals (upon which textbook descriptions commonly rely). The dense subcutaneous fatty layer which binds human skin to underlying structures has no counterpart in laboratory animals. To this difference the author ascribes his observation of a type of primary healing peculiar to man (and possibly the pig). This contrasts with "primary healing" in laboratory animals, which is more akin to secondary healing in man. Repair is considered as a cellular activity—the cells of the epidermis having a propensity to migrate so as to cover surfaces. In deeper tissues wandering cells thought to be derived from lymphocytes are responsible for the deposition of collagen. When there is a "space effect" due to dead material, fluid, or air, secondary repair occurs, with increased vascularity, fibrinous exudate, and eventual bridging of the gap by collagen. Filling in of the "space" continues until limited by an epithelial layer. The author reviews the healing of different human tissues and discusses appropriate treatment in the light of the principles he describes. The book does not claim to be exhaustive; chemical factors, for instance, are dismissed in half a page with the robust clinical justification, "The clinical surgeon is not yet in a position to alter them as might be indicated even if he could investigate them." It is also not always clear which statements are based on observation and experiment and which are matters of opinion. Nevertheless, student, surgeon, and research worker will find in this book an infectious enthusiasm for this important subject, and may with profit be led to reflect on the processes which surgery affects and induces.

J. P. BULL.

HEAD INJURIES

Head Injuries and Their Management. By Francis Asbury Echlin, M.D., C.M., M.Sc., Med.Sc.D., F.A.C.S. (Pp. 127+x; illustrated. 24s.) Philadelphia and Montreal: J. B. Lippincott Company. London: Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd. 1956.

The preface and introduction set out the purpose of this brief monograph. The contents more than justify this purpose in 107 small pages. At first I carried this little book around in my pocket and read it at odd intervals as the author and publishers obviously intended. It deserves much more than such peripatetic attention. Later it won a place by my chair near the fire at home. It is light in the hand, but at intervals should be laid down as one remembers various patients with head injuries of the types it describes so clearly. The book ends with an excellent bibliography covering world literature, and has a good index.

In every way this is a first-class book, short, clear, and concise. The subject is not an easy one to teach or to understand. On this account alone this work can be recommended to teachers, undergraduates, and all in any way responsible for the care of this common group of injuries.

WILLIAM GISSANE.