

## Book Reviews

### COMPLICATIONS OF GASTRECTOMY

*Partial Gastrectomy.* Edited by F. A. R. Stammers, C.B.E., T.D., B.Sc., Ch.M., F.R.C.S., and John A. Williams, M.B., Ch.M., F.R.C.S. (Pp. 309+ix; illustrated. 80s.) London: Butterworths, 1963.

A generation ago the character of a book written by two surgeons and given a title such as this could readily have been surmised. There would have been a few chapters on the choice of suitable cases and on pre-operative preparation and post-operative care, but the greater part of the book would have consisted of detailed descriptions of operation techniques. It is an indication of present-day surgical trends and the new attitudes of surgeons that in this book the various techniques of gastrectomy are not even mentioned, and the whole work is concerned with the complications and metabolic consequences of the operation.

That these consequences are not inconsiderable becomes more and more clear with the passage of time; indeed, to the non-medical reader it might appear that gastrectomy is not an operation but a disease. There are the mechanical complications, which may occur early or late, the post-prandial disturbances, which are present in mild or severe form in fully 50% of cases, the anaemias, the malabsorption of proteins and fats, and finally the late decalcification due to deficient intake of calcium and vitamin D. It is a formidable list of troubles, only made tolerable by the fact that even at their worst they represent an improvement on the pre-operative ulcer pain.

Professor Stammers has been responsible for the earlier chapters, which deal with the mechanical complications and the various rotations and hernias in relation to the stoma, of which he has made a special study. Mr. Williams, with the assistance of various colleagues for special problems, has studied the effects of gastrectomy on the alimentary function, and the various deficiencies arising therefrom.

The book is to be recommended not only for surgeons but for all those who have to treat ulcer patients.

CHARLES ILLINGWORTH.

### ROWETT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

*Progress in Nutrition and Allied Sciences.* Being a contribution marking the first fifty years of the Rowett Research Institute. Edited by D. P. Cuthbertson, C.B.E., M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.E. (Pp. 452+xvii; illustrated. 50s.) Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd Ltd. 1963.

This handsome volume has been published to celebrate the completion of the first half-century of the existence of the Rowett Research Institute. In a foreword Lord Woolton contrasts the glamour of space research with the less spectacular appeal of problems such as protein quality and ruminal digestion, but points out that countless thousands can benefit from the results of research in nutrition. The contributions of the Rowett Institute to such investigations are typified in this book by thirty-nine separate articles, all written by its past or present members. Lord Boyd Orr, who directed the Institute from 1913-45 before becoming the first Director-General of F.A.O., gives a detailed—and at times amusing—account of his early struggles to obtain approval and financial support for the building of the Institute. After the construction of laboratories, a library, and various buildings for social purposes in the grey granite characteristic of Aberdeen further

support was eventually obtained from wealthy patrons for such luxuries as stained-glass windows, and the perpetuation of a grand annual dinner. The present director, Dr. Cuthbertson, carries on the story from 1945 onwards. Both these chapters are illustrated by an excellent selection of photographs, showing members of the staff and some of the Institute's historic moments.

According to David Lubbock, the author of Chapter 3, the necessity for a "marriage between Health and Agriculture" was suggested by Stanley Bruce, now Viscount Bruce of Melbourne, as early as 1935. It is understandable, therefore, that the bias of work at the Rowett Institute—and also that of the majority of the chapters in this book—should be concerned with the nutrition of farm animals, and particularly ruminants. However, as Dr. Isabella Leitch explains in Chapter 36, the main activity of the Commonwealth Bureau of Animal Nutrition, an organization closely associated with the Rowett Research Institute, has been the publication of *Nutrition Abstracts and Reviews*. This valuable periodical has made immense contributions to the furtherance of research in human, no less than in animal, nutrition. Dr. Leitch, with Dr. Aiken, also contributes a chapter on studies on human growth. This strongly suggests that tall people tend to be intellectually and physically superior to short people, and even that tall women have the least trouble in giving birth to children.

Other chapters of medical interest are "Studies on the action of vitamin A, and on calcium and calcification," by James T. Irving; "Nutrition and resistance to infection," by J. W. Howie; "The metabolic response to injury and its nutritional implications," by D. P. Cuthbertson; "Factors influencing man's selection of foods," by Rosa M. Campbell and D. P. Cuthbertson, and "The world food situation as related to knowledge of science and its application," also by Dr. Cuthbertson. References to the literature are included at the end of each chapter. The book concludes with an adequate subject index.

T. MOORE.

### CONVULSIONS IN CHILDREN

*Convulsive Disorders in Children.* With reference to treatment with ketogenic diet. By Haddow M. Keith, M.D. (Pp. 311+vi; illustrated. 85s.) London: J. and A. Churchill Ltd. 1963.

Convulsions occurring in infants and young children are always alarming. Even when they present as isolated incidents considerable difficulties in diagnosis and management may arise, while every general practitioner and physician knows how difficult it is to control recurrent epileptic seizures in some children.

This monograph reviews the literature on epilepsy and related disorders as they occur in childhood. Particular attention is paid to seizures in the newborn, to febrile convulsions, to attacks induced by flickering light, and to associated disorders such as infantile spasms and breath-holding attacks. An excellent chapter by Drs. Bickford and Klass on electroencephalography is included, but another by Dr. Ross Miller on surgical treatment is disturbingly brief—for instance, hemispherectomy is dismissed in five lines. Whereas 80 pages are devoted to details of treatment with the ketogenic diet just over 30 are sufficient for anti-convulsant medication. In the section on treatment of status epilepticus intramuscular paraldehyde and assisted respiration are not mentioned. Throughout, too, there is a surprising lack of critical commentary upon the published work that is quoted in detail, and often when controversial topics are considered one looks in vain for an authoritative