
Surgeons and anatomists who have appreciated Professor Mitchell’s researches into the anatomy of the autonomic system as they have appeared in anatomical and surgical journals during the past eighteen years will appreciate still more the collected work in one volume, beautifully illustrated and accompanied by a very full bibliography of the subject. The book is an exhaustive study by a master who has not only laboured hard and long at what must often have been tedious and exacting dissection, but who has also achieved a literary triumph by blending his own work with the researches of numerous other workers into a book which is at once scientifically sound, and pleasant to read. He has clearly intended it to be used as a book of reference rather than as a work which will be read from cover to cover, and this has necessitated a certain amount of repetition in order to make every subsection self-contained. We have not been able to discover any omissions, and answers can be found to most of the numerous anatomical problems which students and also surgeons engaged in this particular field have had difficulty in understanding. We are not sure whether Professor Mitchell’s views on autonomic afferents can be included in this generally laudatory criticism, for it seems to us clearer to regard fibres originating from dorsal spinal root ganglia or their homologues as distinct from autonomic fibres, even though they may be bound up together in the same nerve bunch. It is interesting that his argument for regarding visceral afferents as autonomic afferents is the only section of the work in which his style, generally most pleasing, becomes vehement—somewhat reminiscent of the gesticulations to distract attention from the weaker part of a sermon!

The illustrations, both photographs and drawings, are beautifully clear and do the publishers great credit. Incidentally they convey a sense of satisfaction that the methods of micro-dissection, which have been so harshly criticised by anatomists who ought to have known better, have been so thoroughly vindicated.

There are large portions of the work, particularly those dealing with the cerebral connections of the autonomic system, which are not at present the direct concern of the surgeon, though it behoves him to know something of the higher centres which control the more peripheral portions of the autonomic system upon which he may be operating. The detailed account of these central connections must be of the greatest possible value to neurophysiologists, and to them as well as to clinicians the work can be warmly recommended.—J. Paterson Ross.


In its capacity of an orthopaedic Baedeker this book certainly covers a huge territory but the inevitably short reference to each subject, irrespective of its relative importance, raises each village to the size of a capital city. Only a small portion of the book can fairly be said to concern itself with fundamentals, and such items are neither clearly specified nor treated as fully as they deserve. Among the forty-six pages devoted to many unusual congenital affections, congenital dislocation of the hip is dealt with in four pages containing seven illustrations; the treatment advocated for the condition is almost purely conservative, the use of the arthrogram is not mentioned, and the decision to perform an open reduction of the hip rests apparently on an arbitrary age limit. Spina bifida is rather summarily dismissed as a subject entirely within the province of the neurosurgeon. The general discussion of skeletal tuberculosis contains views which are unexceptionable, but Pott’s paraplegia receives scant attention and there is no allusion to the more mechanistic explanation of the condition and the consequent need for surgical intervention. The chapters on affections of bone, tumours and allied disorders are much happier and form a quick and easy source of reference in aiding the diagnosis of less routine clinical problems. Neurology is adequately covered and the