BOOK REVIEWS

Consideration is first given to the basic facts of the anatomy and physiology of the vertebral column and the spinal cord, supported by the conventional diagrams and illustrations. This is followed by an account of the pathology of injury, the illustration of which is marred by the fact that some of the radiographs have been printed upside down and others have not reproduced very well. The section on treatment is descriptive and does not enter into controversies concerning the merits of different methods of management. Complications are briefly mentioned and the book concludes with two chapters on Rehabilitation and After Care. This book is not a reference book and it is difficult to define for whom it is written. It is however well worth reading as an introduction to the problems of spinal cord injury, and as such would appeal more to junior staff, general practitioners and paramedical personnel rather than the established specialist in one of the disciplines concerned in the management of paraplegia.—Alan HARDY.


The complexity of modern life has immeasurably increased the difficulties of having and arranging your operation, and many surgeons will be glad of this paperback book which will save them considerable time in explaining the matter to patients. The book is divided into thirds: how to get into a hospital, how the hospital makes arrangements for operations, and a brief description of the common operations carried out under the various specialties.

The multiplicity of arrangements with the hospital and staff are well handled, but the section on the various specialist operations, which suffers most from being necessarily brief, should in many cases be rewritten, though some sections are considerably better than others. In the orthopaedic section one would like to see the words “recovery and convalescence are likely to be prolonged” deleted, and some emphasis laid on the need for early mobilisation and exercise, and how beneficial this is in shortening convalescence. There is an encouraging statement saying that after a partial gastrectomy the rate of absorption of alcohol may be increased, but the reader is left to draw his own conclusions from this and they may be the wrong ones.

On the whole this is a useful little book but it omits some important facts; thus, while obtaining private care is adequately discussed, there is no mention of the virtual impossibility of finding an emergency private bed in London and the fact that many non-urgent cases still have to wait for beds.

We will look forward to a revised edition of this book, or better, fresh publications by the Consumers’ Association. There would be an enormous sale, even among surgeons, of a book on “Which hospital to choose”, or, better still, “Which surgeon to have”. Both gossip writer and administrator eagerly await their appearance.—J. G. BONNIN.


The publication of the present volume is a major event: it has been eagerly awaited since the appearance of Dr Jaffe’s Tumors and Tumorous Conditions of the Bones and Joints in 1956 and fulfils all expectations. With the earlier work, it covers the entire field of orthopaedic pathology, and covers it in a detailed and comprehensive fashion. It will clearly be the definitive work in this field for many years to come.

As with the earlier volume, a central feature of the book is “the idea that problems of diagnosis and differential diagnosis can best be met if the interpretation of a given lesion, its clinical, roentgenographic and pathologic features are considered and evaluated together”. Each chapter of the book is a tribute to the wealth of material that Dr Jaffe has personally studied in this way. The illustrations are of outstanding interest, and like the text, they emphasise integration of radiographic and histological aspects of the subject. Indeed they virtually form an atlas of bone and joint diseases, and they give the reader a feeling of first-hand participation in the study of the cases concerned. It is a little unfortunate that the quality of reproduction does not always do justice to the interest and importance of the material. But with a work of this type, one is seeking perfection!

Most of the case material on which the book is based comes from the Hospital for Joint Diseases in New York, where Dr Jaffe was Director of Laboratories for many years, but he has also had

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