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BOOK REVIEWS


Cystoscopy, which was once a method of examination undertaken only by genito-urinary specialists, has now become a commonplace examination, which any surgeon dealing with bladder conditions may be called upon to carry out. A text-book, therefore, which deals with the subject as clearly as does Mr. MacAlpine’s work on “Cystoscopy” should find a place on the book-shelves of many general surgeons as well as on those of experts. Important works have, it is true, appeared on this subject within recent years, but the majority of them are written in foreign tongues, and are therefore not suitable to those who can read neither French nor German. Those manuals that have appeared in this country have taken the form of atlases with the minimum of text and the maximum of coloured plates, a fact that has rendered them costly, and at the same time insufficient to meet the needs of those not fully versed in the use of the cystoscope. Technique is of the utmost importance in cystoscopy, and to a large number of surgeons, whose opportunities for using the cystoscope are infrequent, the acquirements of a good technique may be difficult. For this reason the details given in Mr. MacAlpine’s preliminary chapters will be of the greatest help in assisting such surgeons to overcome mistakes, which, although trifling, may be yet sufficient to frustrate their attempts to arrive at a precise diagnosis.

The instruments described are those which are more commonly in use, and no attempt has been made to include those forms of cystoscope that are likely to be in the possession only of the specialist. Moreover, in order to economise space, non-essentials, such as a lengthy historical survey of the progress of cystoscopy and an over-technical description of its optics, have been avoided, and emphasis laid more on practical details. Throughout the work are scattered coloured plates illustrating the various appearances that may be met with in different bladder conditions. These have been prepared from coloured drawings made by the well-known medical artist, Mr. Thornton Shiells, and this fact is sufficient to indicate their artistic and scientific merit. Fortunately but little has been lost in the process of reproduction, and whatever the merits or demerits of the text may be, there is no doubt that the coloured plates are second to none in any work dealing with this subject. Turning to the subject of the text it may be said that the book is written in a clear, concise style, and that it is eminently practical. The author has avoided the risk which always exists of branching off on to subjects that are not directly related to cystoscopy, and has confined himself to questions of practical importance rather than of theoretical interest. The arrangement that is most usually adopted: after a description of the technique of cystoscopy
come chapters dealing with the normal bladder, cystitis and ulcerative changes, bilharzia, obstruction, new growths, vesical calculus and foreign bodies. Following these are chapters describing alterations that may be noted in cases of prostatic hypertrophy and changes in the female bladder due to uterine displacements and pelvic tumours. The last five chapters deal with special methods of examination that the cystoscope has rendered possible, namely, catheterisation of ureters, the detection of various forms of ureteric obstruction by wax-tipped bougies, the employment of cystoscopy in the diagnosis of renal conditions and pyelography. But little space has been given to operative cystoscopy, and since the work is primarily for the non-expert the decision to deal mainly with the cystoscope as a means of diagnosis rather than as a method of treatment is probably a wise one. Altogether it may be confidently asserted that Mr. MacAlpine's book is the best treatise on the subject of cystoscopy that has yet appeared from an English source. We recommend it to all requiring a straightforward and practical work on this all-important subject.


The aim of Drs. Lowsley and Kirwin in their "Text-Book on Urology" has been to construct a complete work on the subject in one volume. For this reason, as they state in their preface, their chief difficulty has lain in the reduction of the mass of widely-derived information at their disposal to the dimensions of a practical textbook for students and practitioners. Dr. Lowsley's name is well known in connection with many urological subjects, and perhaps more especially with the embryology and development of the prostate and with the application of regional anaesthesia to genito-urinary surgery. It need hardly be said, therefore, that the chapters dealing with these subjects are of great interest and importance. On the whole, the authors have succeeded in their aim of writing a one-volume text-book that gives a complete survey of the present position of urology. Here and there, however, occur omissions which may be explained perhaps by the fact that only those operative measures that have stood the test of personal experience have been included in the work. As an example of what, to some readers, will appear an omission is the absence of any reference to per-urethral methods of treatment of the enlarged prostate. It is perhaps strange that the counymen of H. H. Young and of C. R. Caulk should have omitted any reference to punch operations on "bar formations," or the treatment of minor grades of enlargement by means of diathermy, and it can only be supposed that either these writers have no personal experience of such methods of treatment or else have tried them and found them wanting. But the discovery of certain omissions in a one-volume text-book is inevitable, and their existence must not be allowed to detract seriously from the value of the work. A book based on personal experience is of far greater value than one that has been constructed from the writings of other authorities. Too often a new text-book is found to be a Réchauffée of previously published works. The "Text-Book of Urology," written by Lowsley and Kirwin, is not
one of these. It is the outcome of work carried on by the authors when they were members of the Urological Staff of the Bellevue Hospital, and of their subsequent experience in the Department of Urology of the New York Hospital. Considering the amount of cutting down that the authors must have carried out in order to confine their work within the limits of a single volume, it is perhaps surprising that they have found it necessary to devote so much time to the consideration of operations for the relief of sterility. In this country no successful results of such procedure as vaso-epididymostomy have yet been published, and the majority of surgeons have abandoned attempts to overcome blockages in the genital tract by excision and anastomosis. Nor do the authors of the work under review furnish any figures that will give the reader any idea of the likelihood of success offered by these methods. One wonders whether their results are better than those which have been obtained on this side of the Atlantic.

The book is well illustrated by means of photographs and drawings that assist the reader materially in understanding the text. Of particular merit are the plates of microscopic sections, both coloured and otherwise, of which a large number have been reproduced. Drs. Lowsley and Kirwin are indefatigable workers and acknowledged experts in their subject, and their text-book will be read with interest by all concerned with this important branch of medical science.


In this monograph Dr. Chesney deals with the immunologic aspects of syphilis which have engaged the attention of students of the disease ever since syphilis was clearly differentiated from other venereal infections with which it was for a time confused. He has drawn freely upon the treatises of Levaëtiti, Bruck and Zinssar, who have summarised the older experimental work and has added the results and observations of other workers who have recently increased our knowledge of immunity in syphilis. He has succeeded in presenting the new data in this monograph with great clearness and the well sustained intellectual endeavour to review the subject must commend itself to all who are interested in the mechanism of immunity in syphilis.

A. D.


This book has been compiled with the object of presenting the outstanding information on the various biochemical tests in compact form, so that the practitioner not concerned with the manipulative technicalities of the subject may become familiar with the significance and clinical interpretation of their results in order that he may apply them to his chemical problems. To this end the author has compiled a considerable amount of information on biochemical tests. In our view he has succeeded in stimulating interest in blood chemistry, but it may be doubted whether the time has yet come to endeavour to assess the chemical significance of many of the tests that are in process of laboratory investigation and study.

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