Book Reviews

ESSENTIALS OF ORTHOPAEDICS. By Philip WILES, M.S., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S., Hon. Orthopaedic Surgeon, Middlesex Hospital and King Edward Memorial Hospital, Consulting Orthopaedic Surgeon, Royal Surrey County Hospital. Formerly: Brigadier, A.M.S.; Consulting Surgeon (Orthopaedics), Middle East Force, and Persia and Iraq Force; and Consulting Surgeon, Eastern Command, India, and 12th Army, S.E.A.C. 10×7 in. Pp. xv+486, with 365 text-figures and 7 coloured plates. Index. 1949. London: J. & A. Churchill, Ltd. Price 42/-.

Mr Philip Wiles has addressed himself to the task of expounding the essentials of orthopaedics for the benefit of the undergraduate student, the surgical resident and the general practitioner. It is unlikely that any two senior clinical teachers will agree on what is "essential" in any field of medicine or surgery. Every monograph is bound to reflect the writer's perspective view of the situation which confronts him. But, in actual fact, it is the personal "slant" which makes this attractively written work of Mr Wiles so appropriate for his chosen audience. The book opens with an excellent chapter on postural defects—a subject which the author made his own some years ago. This is followed by a chapter on back pain, full of practical common sense. The reader is thus introduced to the core of clinical orthopaedics at the outset. This approach deserves the highest praise. Later sections are conventionally devoted to pyogenic infections, tuberculosis of bone and joint, chronic arthritis, tumours of bone, other bone diseases and diseases of the central nervous system. Apart from these selective chapters, orthopaedic disabilities are described in their anatomical relationship to the joints of the trunk and the upper and lower limbs. It would be easy to criticise the relative space allocated to particular topics: for instance, twenty pages on bone tumours, with a tendency to over-emphasis on rarities (e.g., Fig. 327), and only the same number of pages for the chapter on chronic arthritis, in which it must be admitted Mr Wiles has managed to condense the essential features of modern orthopaedic practice. There are also some notable omissions, doubtless in the cause of brevity. A chapter on the principles of fracture treatment—not an easy subject to present in synoptic fashion—would have been valuable; and we miss the historical approach and bibliography of "classical" references, so important for the intellectual stimulus of the undergraduate and house surgeon. The work is bound to take its place amongst the popular student text-books; future editions will undoubtedly be called for; and Mr Wiles will be tempted to expand his admirable book. The selection of essentials will not be easy, but by reason of his ripe experience and sound judgment he is well fitted to undertake it. —HARRY PLATT.

FIG. 35

Two methods of manipulating the dorsal spine.