TRATADO DE CIRUGIA ORTOPEDICA. By M. Bastos ANSART. Pp. 1021 with 978 figures. 1950. Barcelona, Madrid and Lisbon: Editorial Científico Medica. Price Ptas. 480.

Dr Bastos Ansart has drawn on his ripe experience in the production of a comprehensive monograph covering the classical field of the older orthopaedics. His theme throughout is deforming "disease"—congenital or acquired—a theme which he expounds with a wealth of descriptive text and illustrations. The mechanical and operative procedures described in detail are those which the author has found effective in his own practice, but the many references to the writings of contemporary orthopaedic surgeons show that he has been fully aware of what has been happening in the world of orthopaedics outside his own country. This book is a notable contribution to international surgical literature, and it testifies to the high standard of the Spanish school of orthopaedics.—Harry PLATT.

STUDIES ON TUMOUR FORMATION. By G. W. de P. NICHOLSON, M.A., M.B., B.Ch., Late Professor of Pathology, Guy's Hospital, London. 10 × 7½ in. Pp. x+637, with 183 figures. Index. 1950. London: Butterworth & Co. (Publishers) Ltd. Price £3, 3s.

In his introduction to this book Professor Willis describes it as "a fitting memorial to a great man who was too little known in his lifetime." Nicholson's approach to tumour pathology was that of the general biologist with a profound knowledge of structure and its functional interpretation. His background was that of the philosopher who had developed on the one hand a deep humility ever ready to acknowledge his ignorance, and on the other a sturdy independence of thought and fierce intolerance of popular dogma. For these reasons this book stands alone. While being stimulating, arresting, piquant and even entertaining, it is mainly concerned with fundamentals and, being closely reasoned and full of unorthodox and original conceptions, it is far from easy to read and demands patience and considerable mental effort to understand. Nevertheless the serious reader who masters its contents will be amply rewarded and more than likely to find his field of mental vision with regard to the biology of tumour formation very greatly enlarged.

This volume consists of a collection, in chronological sequence, of a series of articles written between the years 1921 and 1938 and published in the Guy's Hospital Reports. There are several main threads running through most of these articles. The first is the belief that in structure, function, and manner of growth, tumours do not differ essentially from other tissues and obey the laws of growth that govern their behaviour. The second is that two basic factors are concerned in tumour growth—an external stimulus or factor of realisation, and an internal cellular reaction. It is heavily stressed throughout the book that this cellular reaction must be essentially natural and biological and entirely physiological. With regard to the external stimulus, or carcinogen, which almost dominates modern research, he was not greatly concerned. He believed that we knew as much about this aspect of the problem as we know about infection. Nicholson was almost entirely preoccupied with the living reacting cell, and he believed that its capacity to grow in perpetuity is a physiological attribute. He defies the reader to define tumour formation and confesses that he is powerless to do so. To say that a "tumour cell has always been abnormal," he says, "explains everything but is merely one of the innumerable ways of begging the question." That "tumours grow without regard for the laws that govern the growth of normal tissues" he "flatly and most emphatically denies." Many tumours are "by no means without function and far from being atypical, some of them surprise us by the degree of their histological differentiation." It is arresting to read that the majority of those who investigate tumours "have as their aim the discovery of the readiest means of getting rid of them. The view taken of them is therefore biased." We are told that only by "adopting the point of view of the tumour can we hope to understand its structure and function." Tumours, he says, can certainly be regarded as useless from the point of view of the bearer but is this a fair way of looking at a tumour? "The foetus *in utero* does not concern itself about the wellbeing of the mother."

Nicholson believed that there is no essential difference between tumours and malformation and that in many tumours there was a delicate adaptation of the tissues to each other. He thought "malignant skin" was a more exact descriptive term than "squamous carcinoma," and "malignant embryonic kidneys" preferable to "Wilms tumour" or "renal adeno-sarcoma." He considered that the foreign-body reaction around many tumours is relatively slight because the tumour is part of the tissues and is treated as such, and that the capsules enclosing tumours are "not an attempt to wall them off but the product of the activity of the tumour, partly due to stretching and fibrosis of the surrounding tissue and strictly comparable to the capsule of a normal organ." It has become a habit with us "to accuse tumours of being autonomous and of deriving