Book Reviews

REGIONAL ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY. By Paul C. COLONNA, M.D., Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, University of Pennsylvania Medical School. 10×6½ in. Pp. xxii+706, with 474 figures. Index. 1950. Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company. Price 57s. 6d.

Only those who have written a text-book of orthopaedic surgery, and perhaps also those who have seriously considered doing so but quailed at the prospect, can appreciate the problems involved. Dr Colonna, however, has succeeded in resolving all the difficulties in a masterly fashion and has covered comprehensively the whole vast field of orthopaedics, including fractures, in a single volume. The opening chapters are concerned with the anatomy and physiology of bone and muscle, and with the general pathology of metabolic, developmental and traumatic disorders of bones and joints. The subsequent sections are regional, and here fractures and dislocations are found in their place alongside the diseases peculiar to the same part. Finally there are chapters on neuromuscular disabilities, tumours of bone, the principles of apparatus and physical medicine. The list of titles of both rare and common diseases is unusually complete; the task of compressing so much into so small a space has been possible only because Dr Colonna's great experience as a surgeon and as a teacher has equipped him well to sift the grain from the much more abundant chaff of the orthopaedic literary harvest. This is no small achievement in a decade that holds the present dearer than the future, and when many are more interested in short-term results than lasting, but more hardly earned, success. The presentation is greatly helped by many excellent line drawings and a wise selection of illustrations. The choice of radiographs is so good that it is unfortunate they are not better reproduced.

The graduate and undergraduate students to whom the book is addressed will always be indebted to the author for the pains he has given to its preparation. Here, in the space of a few hundred pages, is to be found the experience not only of a fine surgeon but also of the great tradition of surgery devolving from Royal Whitman, to whom the volume is dedicated.—Philip WILES.

SURGERY OF THE SHOULDER. By Anthony F. DEPALMA, M.D., James Edwards Professor of Orthopedic Surgery and Head of the Department, Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. 10×7 in. Pp. xix+438, with 357 figures. Index. 1950. Philadelphia, London, Montreal: J. B. Lippincott Company. Price £7.

This is the largest book on the shoulder that has been published since Codman's classic in 1934. In the intervening period a great deal of work has been done and a vast number of papers written on the subject. In his preface Dr DePalma states his desire to assemble this accumulated knowledge, and he has made a praiseworthy, if not completely successful, attempt. In addition, he has himself made a most valuable contribution on the variational and morbid anatomy of the joint from an extensive study of post-mortem material. His work on the morbid anatomy of the rotator cuff is well illustrated and shows that many tears of considerable extent are compatible with good function. The diagnosis of tendon tears is made on purely clinical grounds. He advocates conservative treatment in all acute cases and follows McLaughlin in advising operation only when serious disability persists after six to eight weeks. There is no mention of the work of Lindblom and others on arthrography as an aid to accurate diagnosis. The various techniques of tendon repair are described in detail. The author's definition of frozen shoulder is very wide. Few surgeons in this country would recognise the case described on page 147 as typical. Fractures of the upper end of the humerus and their treatment are described at length, but there is no mention in the index of fractures of the scapula. There are other lacunae: no description is given of subluxation of the shoulder, nor any bibliography of obstetrical paralysis, which is rather cursorily described. Nevertheless, operative procedures of many kinds are well described and illustrated. This is a most useful source book and the descriptions of morbid anatomy and pathology are good. Unfortunately, the reader becomes more and more aware of feeling that it is inadequately backed by long clinical experience and the critical judgment that it should engender. The book is beautifully produced and well illustrated. It is heavy on the hand and on the purse.—V. H. ELLIS.