Book Reviews

EL HOMBRO DOLOROSO. By M. MERCHÁN. Preface by Dr G. Marañón. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ in. Pp. xvi + 141, with 63 figures. Index. 1951. Barcelona: Salvat Editores, S.A. Price not quoted.

To perform an exhaustive study of the pathology and treatment of the painful shoulder in only 150 pages is a real *tour de force*, but to do it in a systematic way without ever falling into dogmatism is even more rare. This is what the author of this little book has done. It is evident that it has been written mainly for students and young postgraduate trainees and doctors who have not made orthopaedics their speciality, but the field is covered in such a way that even experienced orthopaedic surgeons will profit from its reading. Finally, the warm introduction of the author, more than of the book, by Dr G. Marañón, one of the leading medical men of contemporary Spain, is delightful.

The author summarily describes the embryology, anatomy and function of the shoulder, and then gives a detailed description of the methods of clinical examination. From Chapter 4 onwards the classification and detailed study of the conditions underlying the painful shoulder is undertaken. The causes are divided into two main groups, namely extrinsic and intrinsic. Among the first, shoulder pain referred from the cervical spine and nerve roots and the heart is discussed; and, among the second, bursitis, tendinitis, peri-arthritis and arthritis are described and their treatment outlined. The last chapter is dedicated to the psychological element which may contribute to the clinical picture.

There is a fairly extensive bibliography mainly from medical literature written in English (fifty-two references) whereas there are only seven references to works in Spanish, two respectively from Germany and France and one from a Scandinavian journal. Apart from this bibliography the work is based on the personal experience of the author, collected from the study of over 100 cases of painful shoulder seen in two departments of the main hospitals in Madrid.

The literary style of this book is simple but at the same time very precise and clear, a combination not very frequently found in modern Spanish medical writings after more than fifty years of strong German medical influence. It is a joy to find that Dr Merchán has been able to write so clearly almost without the use of neologisms which have been so freely introduced into the Spanish medical literature by many of the postgraduates whose training took place in Vienna, Munich or Berlin. I am not acquainted with a similar contemporary book in English, as Codman's classic work on the shoulder is already nearly eighteen years old and de Palma's recent work covers a much wider field.—J. TRUETA.

TRAUMATOLOGIA DE LOS MENISCOS DE LA RODILLA. By J. R. CABOT. 10×7 in. Pp. 285, with 161 figures. Index. 1951. Madrid: Editorial Paz Montalvo. Price Ptas. 165.

I enjoyed this book so much that I would like to go to Barcelona and meet Dr Cabot. I would also like to meet his publisher and artist. For certainly the book is beautifully published and illustrated, and I think that I would be meeting three artists.

No one reading this book could doubt for a moment that Dr Cabot had removed a great many semilunar cartilages. If one picks on some minute point and follows it in his book, one will find it dealt with meticulously. What is the cause of, for instance, cysts of the external cartilage? How does one treat them? Are they associated with a tear of the cartilage? The answers are all given authentically in detail in the book. Even by innuendo information is imparted. One got the impression for instance that Dr Cabot has not actually seen a cyst of the medial meniscus himself, but he did not want to deny the existence of such a cyst. There is even a delicate hint about the difficulty of differentiating between cysts of the medial meniscus on the one hand, and enlargement of the anserine bursa, or merely enlargement of the semimembranosus bursa tracking forwards, on the other. In this I agree with him entirely. The section on differential diagnosis is comprehensive and helpful, while that on pneumography is instructive and enticing. He almost overcomes my prejudice against the latter.

One can almost understand the book without possessing a knowledge of Spanish, but it would well repay translation.—Bryan McFARLAND.