SURGERY OF TRAUMA. Edited by Warner F. BOWERS, Colonel, M.C., U.S.A., Formerly Chief Surgical Consultant, Office of the Surgeon General; with forty-one other contributors. Forewords by Melvin A. Casberg, M.D., Chairman, Armed Forces Medical Policy Council; and Surgeons General of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. $10\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ in. Pp. xxv+605, with 284 figures. Index. 1953. Philadelphia, London, Montreal: J. B. Lippincott Company. Price £6.

This book called the *Surgery of Trauma* could have been more aptly called the *Surgery of Battle Casualties*. Edited by Colonel Bowers, it includes contributions from forty-two surgeons in the American Armed Forces and was initiated by the Armed Forces Medical Policy Council to collect information and conclusions from the treatment of wounds in the second world war.

The first section deals with the physiological aspects of the management of trauma and includes the latest American ideas on the factors in wound healing. The effects of radiation, ACTH and cortisone are described. There is a good review of the factors that influence the healing of wounds in general and in specialised tissues. The accounts of the effects of radiation, heat and cold are sound and up-to-date. In the second section war surgery is discussed under regional headings, with much useful detail in handling battle casualties from First Aid to final treatment. The section on Military Considerations in Wound Management includes some general remarks and an interesting chapter on wound ballistics. Wound shock, burn shock and kidney damage are particularly well done.

Not every authority will agree with all that is written in this book. For instance, most would not accept the criteria for ulnar and median nerve damage on page 150, or the views on Bennett's fracture on page 328, or the splinting of fingers in extension for four weeks after repair of extensor tendons. The use of the book as a reference authority is spoiled by the absence of a bibliography at the end of some chapters, such as those on eye wounds and cranio-cerebral trauma. There is a wealth of information in this well illustrated and beautifully produced book.—L. W. PLEWES.

INJURIES OF THE SPINAL CORD. Edited by George C. PRATHER, M.D., F.A.C.S., Consulting Surgeon for Urology, Boston City Hospital; and Frank H. MAYFIELD, M.D., F.A.C.S., Assistant Professor of Clinical Surgery, University of Cincinnati, College of Medicine; with seven other contributors. 9×6 in. Pp. xiv+396, with 125 figures. Index. 1953. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. Price 63s.

This is a collective work by nine authors on the many problems of traumatic paraplegia. Each section is devoted to one particular problem and is written by an author of wide experience. The whole book, however, suffers from the defects which appear so frequently in collective works. It is unbalanced. For example, out of 365 pages no less than 140 pages are devoted to the problems of the urinary bladder and 60 pages to the problems of nutrition, whereas only 40 pages deal with the neurosurgical aspects and 10 suffice for the "orthopaedic principles of treatment!"

The chapter on urological aspects is extremely good, giving a clear and concise account of modern views on the treatment of the paralysed bladder and including an excellent section on the physiology of micturition. The chapter on nutrition is full of interest though it is difficult to understand what is the particular connection with paraplegia since the metabolic changes so well described occur after all types of injury. Nevertheless, this very full account will be of interest to all surgeons dealing with injuries. It is also pleasant to see the important pioneer work of Cuthbertson in this field so generously recognised. The chapters on "neurosurgical aspects and orthopaedic principles" are frankly disappointing. There is little information to be gained from them beyond that already available in the standard text-books. Neither the cord injury nor the vertebral injury is fully discussed. Probably the most difficult problem of all—whether or not the cord should be explored—is hardly discussed at all, whilst it is a little surprising to read that "the immediate treatment of spinal fractures with or without cord injury is so well established that it needs little more than passing mention."

In spite of the criticisms the book is well worth reading by all who are faced with the treatment of these difficult cases. For those wishing to probe deeper there is, with most chapters, a very full bibliography.—Frank HOLDSWORTH.