Book Reviews

DISEASES OF MUSCLE. By Raymond D. ADAMS, M.A., M.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Neurology, Harvard Medical School, Chief of Neurological Service, Massachusetts General Hospital; D. DENNY-BROWN, M.D., D.Phil., F.R.C.P., James Jackson Putnam Professor of Neurology, Harvard Medical School, Director, Neurological Unit, and Neurologist-in-Chief, Boston City Hospital; and Carl M. PEARSON, M.D., Former Resident in Pathology, Mallory Institute of Pathology, Boston City Hospital. 9½×7 in. Pp. xv+556, with 189 figures and 1 colour plate. Index. 1953. London, Toronto, Melbourne, Sydney and Wellington: Cassell and Company Limited. Price £5, 18s. 6d.

Although much detailed information on the pathology of diseases of muscle has accumulated over the years, the subject is most inadequately presented in text-books of general pathology or of clinical subjects, and is consequently familiar only to the restricted circle of clinicians and laboratory workers who have a special interest in this field. Until now no comprehensive account has been available, and the present volume—whose aim, as stated in the preface, is “to aid the student of morphology to an understanding of the whole class of muscle diseases”—is therefore welcome as filling an important gap in medical literature. Indeed, the gap is filled with distinction, and the volume, which comes from the Neurological Unit of the Boston City Hospital and the Harvard Medical School, will clearly be a standard work of reference on the subject for many years. Its authors are to be congratulated on providing an admirable and up-to-date outline of muscle diseases, which will be of immediate interest, not only to histopathologists, but to physicians, neurologists, orthopaedic surgeons and all others concerned with the study of the locomotor system.

After an outline of the histology and embryology of muscle, its basic pathological reactions are outlined, detailed reference being made to experimental studies of response to injury, regeneration and the events following denervation. The final section of the book comprises a systematic account of the pathology of muscle and includes important chapters on “Muscular Dystrophies,” “Traumatic and Circulatory Diseases,” and “Spinal and Neural Muscular Atrophies.” In every section there is a strong interplay of clinical knowledge, neurophysiology and experimental pathology, all of which are essential for an understanding of the morphology of muscle diseases. The work embodies a careful and scholarly survey of the extremely scattered literature on muscle pathology, and provides a most useful bibliography of various aspects of the subject. There is a good index; many carefully chosen photomicrographs illustrate the text; the standard of production of the book is high. Apart from its value as a source of general information on the muscle diseases, the book is of considerable practical importance—to clinicians and pathologists alike—at a time when biopsy examination is playing an increasing part in the diagnosis of muscle diseases, particularly those involving denervation or dystrophy.—H. A. Sissons.

RESECTION-RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HIP. Arthroplasty with an Acrylic Prosthesis. By Jean JUDET, Robert JUDET, Jean LAGRANGE and Jean DUNOYER. Edited by K. I. NISSEN. 9×7 in. Pp. xii+151, with 101 figures. 1954. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Price 30s.

It is the usual fate of a new operation, or indeed of any new method of treatment, either to be rejected without trial or to be used unscientifically with all the short-sighted enthusiasm dictated by fashion and nurtured by inexperience. Ultimately a mounting total of failures or of disasters leads either to discarding the technique or, usually years later, to better assessment of its usefulness and limitations. If the new operation is one that can be performed easily even if badly, or that can be mutilated enough to make its performance easy, it can be almost certain of over-enthusiastic reception and of equally silly repudiation. Such was the fate, to mention only one example, of internal fixation of fractures. “O stormy people! unsad, and ever untrew! Ay undiscree, and chaungynge as a vane.” Chaucer might well have written the lines of us.