Book Reviews

TEXTBOOK OF OPERATIVE SURGERY. By Eric L. FARQUHARSON, M.D., F.R.C.S. (Ed.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.), Surgeon, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Member of Clinical Teaching Staff, University of Edinburgh. 10 × 6½ in. Pp. viii + 853, with 623 figures, some in colour. Index. 1954. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Price 75s.

This is a good book in that it achieves its aim of presenting the whole subject of operative surgery in balanced perspective from the *viewpoint of the general surgeon in training*, and it will certainly help him to satisfy the examiners for the Fellowship of any of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons. The examiners are nearly all general surgeons, and since general surgery has now become a rather broad speciality, it is necessary for a candidate to learn the scope of his examiner's interests. The author states that operations that are less often performed, and those that lie more strictly within the specialised fields, are described more briefly and in small print. It is, therefore, possible to tell which operations a general surgeon regards as specialised: for example, the operative treatment of hare-lip is in small type, and that of congenital dislocation of the hip is in large; the repair of an injured ureter is in small type, whilst the repair of an injured sciatic nerve is in large; thoracoplasty is in small type, and operations for the relief of recurrent dislocation of the shoulder are in large; tumours of the brain are dealt with in small type, and tumours of bone in large; and the repair of a fistula of the bladder is in small type, whilst the repair of an old injury to a peripheral nerve is in large type. It seems that orthopaedic surgery is not regarded as a speciality.

These comments are a criticism of the present methods of training and examination which make this book necessary. They are not criticisms of the book itself which is worthy of much praise. The text is clearly written in simple language that reveals the orderly mind of the skilled teacher. It is profusely illustrated and the figures, many in colour, are so wisely selected and beautifully drawn that the veriest tyro could not fail to follow the descriptions—the amount of hard work which this has involved has to be experienced to be appreciated. The section relating to orthopaedic surgery is for the most part orthodox, but there is an occasional startling statement such as that, in congenital torticollis, a “sternomastoid tumour” should be excised without delay.—Philip WILES.

AMPUTATIONS. By Leon GILLIS, M.B.E., M.B. (Witwatersrand), M.Ch.Orth. (Liverpool), F.R.C.S. (England and Edinburgh), Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon to Queen Mary's (Roehampton) Hospital, London. Foreword by Sir Harry PLATT, President of the Royal College of Surgeons. 10 × 8 in. Pp. xi + 423, with 342 figures. Index. 1954. London: William Heinemann Medical Books Ltd. Price £4, 4s.

It is unusual to find a book that covers so completely the conditions, both traumatic and non-traumatic, that justify amputation. In this book all these conditions are described, the non-traumatic ones at considerable length. The indications for amputation under different circumstances are given and are made additionally clear by the inclusion of a large number of photographs taken before operation. The best level and proper time to do these different amputations is laid down. The technique of doing the amputations at different levels is described, but the description of some of these is not very full and is often not accompanied by diagrams to illustrate the details of the operation. The whole book is extensively illustrated and contains a very comprehensive bibliography that includes almost everything that has been written in relation to amputations.

The section on congenital deformities and amputations in childhood is good, and the section on the use of extension limbs for very short legs is a helpful addition to a subject of which little is generally known. Besides his knowledge of the conditions that necessitate amputation the author shows a considerable familiarity with the late behaviour of stumps when they are fitted with artificial limbs, and describes at length the complications that may arise and their causes and treatment. Causalgia and phantom limbs are discussed, but apparently not much that is new has been developed to relieve these distressing conditions. It is rather pleasing to note that Syme's amputation is considered favourably if it is done at a low level where the cut ends of the bone are broad and the weight-bearing soft tissues are obtained from the sole of the foot.

The book contains a good deal that applies more to general surgery than to amputations. It is rather bulky for a text-book for students, but it is a very interesting and up-to-date book for anyone particularly interested in amputations.—A. B. LEMESURIER.