CONGENITAL ANOMALIES OF THE HAND AND THEIR SURGICAL TREATMENT.
By Arthur Joseph BARSKY, M.D., D.D.S., Attending Surgeon for Plastic Surgery, Mount Sinai Hospital, New York City; Professor of Clinical Surgery, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York City. $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ in. Pp. x+165, with 77 figures. Appendix and Index. 1958. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher. Toronto: The Ryerson Press. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. Price 43s.

In recent years much work has been done on the nature and origin of congenital abnormalities. In particular, serious thought has been given to the influence of radiation upon the germ plasm and the production of mutations. Aristotle said, "Of a certainty the germ cell is both originator and controller of this child from that parent; these things lie in its nature and there it must develop. Empedocles erred when he said that many of the characters of living forms arise through their environment during development . . . For man generates man and the special characters of the parent determine the same characters in the offspring." It may be that modern research will continue to show that Empedocles was not so wrong as Aristotle believed.

This monograph opens with a review of the present outlook upon the etiology of these distressing conditions and discusses the part played by genetic and environmental factors. The author wisely

FIG. 58

Operative procedure for the *pouce flottant*. The original site is indicated by the broken line. At the first operation the thumb was migrated proximally on a neurovascular pedicle. At the second operation, several months later, the metatarsophalangeal joint of the middle toe was transplanted, as shown in the diagram. A lap joint was used to bring the phalanges together, while the metatarsal was wired into a prepared groove at the base of the metacarpal of the index finger. It will be necessary to perform tendon transfers at some future time. In the ten months that have elapsed since operation, the graft appears to be growing satisfactorily, but one cannot predict with certainty its final fate.

offers no clinical classification of hand anomalies, for he points out that many are complex and admit of no detailed grouping. He gives a glossary of the recognised descriptive terms. The numerous illustrations are well chosen and clearly produced.

The work is based upon an analysis of his own clinical experience of 165 cases and a survey of the literature of the past thirty-five years. Each condition—syndactyly, polydactyly, brachydactyly, ectrodactyly, macrodactyly, club hand and others—is considered in detail, and views are expressed upon the principles and technique of treatment. In some cases there is little that can be done, but in many cases there is much that wise and thoughtful surgery can achieve. Those who take this book to heart will find it a useful guide to the intricate problems of malformation. It represents the views of a wise and experienced plastic surgeon and will repay careful study.—R. G. PULVERTAFT.