Surgery and Clinical Pathology in the Tropics. By Charles BOWESMAN, *O.B.E.*, M.D., F.R.C.S.E., F.A.C.S., D.T.M.&H.Ed. Formerly Medical Officer, Gambia, West Africa; Surgical Specialist, Gold Coast and Ghana Governments. 10×8 in. Pp. viii+1,068, with 321 figures. Index. 1960. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Price £5, 10s.

The author has set himself the task in a most ambitious way of covering the whole field of surgery in the tropics. In the introduction he indicates what little help there is in medical literature for the young surgeon in the tropics who relies on his education from standard text-books of surgery. Although there is much written on tropical medicine, that on surgical problems is sparse and mostly out of date.

Bowesman pays homage to the general principles of surgery and discusses, at times fully, the conditions common both to temperate and tropical climates. Of particular value are his descriptions of the characteristic modifications that occur in work of this sort. There is a chapter of over 200 pages on abdominal surgery which is loaded with observations of this nature. In addition he plunges courageously and profoundly into indigenous problems with the knowledge of one who has great experience in this field. Chapters on sickle cell disease in surgery, helminthic infections, schistosomiasis, ritual operations in the tropics, plastic surgery with special reference to keloid formation and bites of animals and snakes, and the effects of other noxious agents make fascinating reading in this country and will certainly be of great assistance to the tropical surgeon or the general factotum working in isolation.

The surgeon responsible for injuries of the locomotor system and interested in orthopaedic surgery will find the space allotted to these subjects disappointing and poorly representative of the demand for this branch of surgery. He will be made conscious of the possibility of having to treat fractures without radiological control but, finding himself in such a situation, will be assisted little by this book. There is practically no mention of bone and joint tuberculosis nor of the orthopaedic and reconstructive treatment of poliomyelitis and leprosy. To suggest that Nicola's operation for recurrent dislocation of the shoulder is the best available is a reversion to pre-war concepts.

It is not surprising that much has been omitted but astounding that so vast a field has been covered and regarded in such light; this book will make a notable addition to surgical literature in a field which so far is comparatively neglected. Whether it fills and adequately bridges the gap must be debatable. It will have to prove its value as a standard work among the new medical schools of the tropics and run the gauntlet both of praise and criticism of the teachers and students of those pioneer institutions. To the student it has two superficial disadvantages: it is inconveniently heavy and it is costly. Its main value will be as a book of reference and as a companion to surgeons in the tropics.—Philip NEWMAN.

The Effect of Advancing Age upon the Human Spinal Cord. By L. Raymond MORRISON, M.D., with the collaboration of Stanley COBB, M.D., and Walter BAUER, M.D. 11½×8½ in. Pp. x+127, with 89 figures. 1959. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. London: Oxford University Press. Price 48s.

There can be few pathologists who have not longed for a series of volumes in which the range of normal histological appearances of various organs are clearly set out, particular emphasis being laid upon variations with physiological activity and age. Neuropathologists do not differ from their colleagues in this respect and there is no doubt that many will consult this book by Dr Morrison and his collaborators.

The book, which is well produced apart from an occasional untidy and unclear photomicrograph, is divided into two parts. The first part, which deals specifically with the effects of ageing on the spinal cord, was a by-product of a study of the neurological disturbances in rheumatoid arthritis, the investigators having to establish the "normal for age" set of appearances before proceeding with their main investigation. Accordingly the appearances of the cord in infancy and the first decade are not included, which is regrettable. They would have enhanced the value of the book.

Thirty-one spinal cords were studied, the cases being grouped in decades from the second to the ninth. They were obtained from patients dying from non-neurological disease in a general hospital and representative blocks were taken from the cervical, thoracic and lumbar regions. The disease in each case is not listed though there were cases of malignant hypertension, rheumatic carditis, disseminated lupus erythematosus, miliary tuberculosis and carcinomatosis.

It is realised that it takes much time and is often difficult to obtain tissues from cases of sudden death in otherwise healthy subjects of the appropriate age, but it is felt that this work would have been immeasurably improved if this had been done. In presenting the findings "no attempt, or at least very little, was made to correlate the histological findings with the systemic diseases of the patients, for there were too few cases of any one diagnosis in this series to make such a correlation valuable." Because of this, and the failure to discuss the cases individually, the reader is unable