Book Reviews

Diseases of Bones and Joints. By Louis LICHTENSTEIN, M.D., Clinical Professor of Pathology, University of California, San Francisco. 26 × 18 cm. Pp. ix + 228, with 287 figures. Index. 1970. London: Henry Kimpton. Price £7.90.

To a generation of orthopaedic surgeons and pathologists Lichtenstein's *Bone Tumours* has become one of the classics, full of clear, concise information and sound sense. One therefore approached this new book by Lichtenstein with eager anticipation.

In the space of one small volume the author has attempted to cover all aspects of orthopaedic disorders, including a chapter on fractures, giving in many instances clinical accounts of the disorders and comments on therapy as well as brief pathological descriptions. Inevitably this has resulted in a rather superficial book which can be read with effortless pleasure but which will certainly disappoint as a work of reference. Lichtenstein dedicates the book to his students and it should in fairness be judged in this light. But many students may be irritated by such loose observations as "a familial incidence has been noted" in conditions in which precise patterns of inheritance are known. Some sections are quite excellent, such as the full and well illustrated accounts of Paget's disease and histiocytosis X, while other important conditions, osteoporosis, for example, are dismissed very briefly without even a histological description (and with the radiographs printed upside down in Figures 8-2 and 11-5).

From an author of such eminence in the field of orthopaedic pathology one would have welcomed fuller pathological accounts and more photomicrographs, for the quality of the illustrations is excellent. This is a good book but, regrettably, not one that is likely to become a classic.—John CHALMERS.

Operative Surgery—Volume 11. Second edition. The Hand. Consultant editor R. Guy PULVERTAFT, M.B., B.Ch., M.D.(Hon.), F.R.C.S., Orthopaedic Surgeon, Derbyshire Royal Infirmary; Surgeon, Harlow Wood Orthopaedic Hospital. Under the general editorship of Charles ROB, M.C., M.D., M.Chir., F.R.C.S.; and Rodney SMITH, M.S., F.R.C.S.; with sixteen other contributors. 28.5 × 22.5 cm. Pp. x + 262, with many figures. Index. 1970. London: Butterworth & Co. (Publishers) Ltd. Price £7.75.

Within the limitations of the heavily illustrated operative textbook this is a good volume. Surgery of the hand lends itself particularly well to illustration. Despite this I must confess a prejudice against this "encyclopaedia" of operative technique, as I have found in general the black and white illustrations in these volumes to be disappointing.

The great majority of chapters are most ably produced. I would, however, comment in the chapter on fractures, on the use of screws and plates on phalangeal and metacarpal fractures. These are mostly given up by hand surgeons in favour of Kirschner wire fixation. Bennett's fracture is treated by a screw whereas it is much more usually and simply fixed by a pin transversely placed between the shafts of the first and second metacarpals. There is an illustration of a vertical pin in a shaft of a first metacarpal fracture. I would doubt that this particular fracture often requires internal fixation as it is easily reduced and immobilised in plaster. Do cortical bone pegs shaped by high speed drills have a place in the fixation of fractured phalanges?

In the chapter on Dupuytren's contracture there is some discussion on the difficulties of restoring movement and overcoming the contractures of the metacarpo-phalangeal joints. The contracture of these joints is immediately relieved by excision of the palmar fascia. A splint holding these joints straight is not generally advocated. There is an illustration of a skin graft in the treatment of Dupuytren's contracture. It is doubtful whether many people use this now. I did not find a reference to the Zancoli operation for clawing of the fingers nor a discussion of the alternatives to the author's own procedures, good as these are. The chapter on hand splints is valuable because it illustrates the basic principles of hand splinting but there are many hand splints developed in recent years that should be illustrated. Hand surgery often has to be done by inexperienced surgeons. Despite these minor criticisms this book will be an invaluable aid to those younger men involved in the care of the injured hand.—J. I. P. JAMES.