

patients, for a pin (which he favours) will frighten any child, while Ligat's pinching reflex is looked on as tickling until it really hurts and in this way can give valuable information. In adults also it pinpoints (if one may use the expression) the hyperaesthetic spot much better than a pin, and will usually distinguish clearly between appendix and Fallopian tube or gall-bladder and duodenum.

It is curious, but perhaps in line with modern teaching, not to distinguish between signs and symptoms, and this seems to be why the valuable chapter on examination of the patient makes no mention of specific areas of tenderness, which are not the same as those of pain. There is no reference to the suggestive increase in tenderness on inspiration in cases of cholecystitis or the almost pathognomonic tenderness on deep pressure above the middle of the scapula, which is quite different in position from the shoulder pain, and therefore particularly helpful.

A perplexing symptom, that is barely mentioned, is hiccough, and in these days when so many people get cortisone in one way or another, attention might be drawn to the effect that this may have on the symptoms and signs of acute abdominal disease.

These are minor criticisms. Here we have a most practical treatise on the diagnosis of the acute abdomen, based on a lifetime experience, packed with information, but so well written that it is not stodgy: full of detail, but so clear that it is not confusing. Doctors and their patients will benefit if it is widely used.

An Introduction to Chest Surgery. GEOFFREY FLAVELS, F.R.C.S., M.R.C.P. London, Oxford University Press. (1957), pp. xlv + 354. Illustrated. Price 30s.

This is an excellent book to be read with pleasure and profit by all. It is written by one who has the highest medical as well as surgical qualifications. Mr Flavell's approach is always that of an experienced, discerning and sympathetic doctor who places his patients (as individuals) before any treatment that may be indicated. For instance, referring to the use of pneumonectomy in treating cancer of the lung he very wisely comments that "There is no point in ridding a man of his cancer only to have him die of lack of breath". In fact the whole context is studded with practical statements such as this.

Although from the title one may expect a textbook on surgery on the usual lines, a most pleasant surprise awaits the reader. Its range is so very much broader than a dry surgical tome. Each condition that is mentioned is discussed from the aspects of causation, both social as well as medical, diagnosis, treatment—of the patient as well as his disease, prognosis and, of course, pathology. The style of writing is fresh, and the author will surely achieve his object

of "hoping one day to see a student read it in the train". It is eminently readable.

There are three parts to the book. The first and largest part is concerned with the lungs and thoracic confines and includes chapters on "How to look at a chest x-ray," "Surgical anatomy" (which is a most valuable refresher for a rusty general practitioner) and on specific problems such as abscesses, empyema, bronchiectasis and others. That on cancer of the lung is by far the best discussion of all its various aspects that I have seen. The second part of the book deals with oesophageal disorders and the third is an excellent description of the scope of surgery in the treatment of various lesions of the heart and great vessels.

Thoracic surgery has really developed only in the past two decades and there must be very few family doctors who have had any experience or teaching on this subject; nevertheless its scope is tremendous, it is therefore for our own and our patient's sakes that we keep up-to-date. This book is an excellent and pleasant way of doing so.

Ward 4: The Mallinckrodt Research Ward of the Massachusetts General Hospital. JAMES HOWARD MEANS; with a Foreword by CHARLES SIDNEY BURWELL. Harvard. Harvard University Press. London. Oxford University Press. (1958). xviii + 187 pp. Price, 36/-.

This short work—this little pastiche, as the author modestly calls it—is a valuable addition to the history of medical research. Ward 4 of Massachusetts General Hospital was first established as a research unit in 1924 with ten beds, and it has not since been increased. Around it have been established very well equipped laboratories for the study of metabolism and endocrinology. Dr Means was in charge of the medical fortunes of the ward from its inception until 1951, and he gives an account of the work performed, the patients investigated and treated, and the many research students who have found in the ward a haven in which to follow up their ideas. It is a human story, and great names in American medicine fill the pages: Aub on lead poisoning, Albright on bone metabolism, Edsall on thyroid and parathyroid disorders, Bauer on bone disease, gout, and arthritis, and many others. Dr Means believes that research workers should be restricted by the least possible control—a policy that has brought wonderful results in the alleviation of human suffering.

Written for the lay man, the medically trained reader may at times be irritated by a tendency towards over-simplification, nevertheless those interested in medical research will learn much from these pages. In Dr Means own words "there also is a crying need