BOOK REVIEWS

CYSTOSCOPY AND UROGRAPHY

It is unfortunately a very common experience for a reviewer to find himself disappointed and somewhat disgruntled after reading a new book. It is, therefore, all the more pleasurable to come across a book such as this, which is not only excellent in itself, but so much more comprehensive than its somewhat unassuming title would suggest. Many of the surgical calling will already be familiar with the previous editions of this book; both they and those who have yet to make the book’s acquaintance cannot fail to derive great profit from this edition. Thirteen years have passed since the previous edition, during which time urology has progressed considerably; the new edition contains much new material in all sections, and in particular a new chapter on the pathology of urinary tuberculosis and a chapter on ‘punch’ prostatectomy (by R. H. O. B. Robinson).

The book starts with a description of the modern cystoscope, in particular of its optical arrangements. There follows a full account of the appearances of the normal bladder, and all the various abnormal and diseased conditions of this viscus. The chapter on prostatic enlargement contains a full account of endoscopic resection, both by means of electrotome and cold punch. The remainder of the book contains an equally full description of the use of instrumental and retrograde pyelography, and their appearances in health and disease. In all sections of the book various conditions are described with the greatest clarity, and in a lively and interesting manner; further, whilst the important conditions receive detailed consideration, the less common ones are also adequately covered so that the whole subject is comprehensively set out. The book is lavishly illustrated, with illustrations, furthermore, which add very considerably to the text; in particular does this apply to the sections on pyelography.

The author, moreover, does not confine himself simply to descriptions of the cystoscopic appearances of the various conditions. Basing his procedure on the principle that proper interpretation is not possible without an understanding of the underlying pathology, Mr. MacAlpine includes most valuable and stimulating pathological, clinical and therapeutic information in all sections of the book, with full and lucid discussions of many urological problems. As a result this book is far more than its title would suggest, and gives a very wide picture of many aspects of urology. In a book of such high and even merit it is difficult to single any particular section, but those on urinary tuberculosis, prostatic disease, congenital renal anomalies and pelvic resorption are outstandingly instructive and stimulating.

Whilst specialist urologists will no doubt find statements with which they disagree and theories and details at which to cavil, this book will be of profound interest to them, but in particular will it be valuable as a guide and reference work to the general surgeon. The postgraduate student will find it an essential part of his reading, and indeed it should surely find a place on the shelves of all those who, either habitually or only occasionally, use a cystoscope.

MR. CARLYLE, MY PATIENT
A Psychosomatic Biography

The writing of a biography can be approached from several angles. It can be designed to give a stereoscopic picture of the life of its subject; it can be used to illuminate the period in which the subject lived; and it can be concerned particularly with the interplay of the personality and achievements of a man and his environment. Thus it is often a valuable instrument of historical research. There is nothing inconsistent, therefore, in a biography which sets out to trace the emotional reactions of an individual and seeks to explain these in terms of modern psychological thought.

Dr. Halliday writes on the assumption that he had been consulted by Carlyle, then aged 28, who sought a cure for his dyspepsia, the cause of which had baffled his physicians. He places at our disposal his case notes and the deductions he draws from them. Carlyle’s infancy and childhood, and probable relationship with his parents; his reaction to school; and his early disappointments and frustration as a teacher, are all carefully studied from the point of view of the ‘personality background’ and cause of his symptoms. His marriage with Jane Welsh was an alliance of intellect and although each appreciated the qualities of the other the union did not bring peace of mind. The effect of this emotional background upon Carlyle’s private and professional life is analysed in detail.

This is a decidedly interesting experiment in biography. The ordinary reader, however, will find it less easy to read, and therefore less satisfying, than, say, Carlyle’s letters or those of Jane Welsh. He may even find many of the deductions far-fetched and difficult to accept, and may consequently become needlessly prejudiced against the whole idea of a psychosomatic approach to a man of genius. Carlyle may not be a ‘best seller’ today, and it might have been kinder to allow us to regard him as did the author of ‘Tom Brown’s School-days’ as ‘teacher, prophet, seer—who in many ways moved more deeply than any other the hearts of his generation.’ Who is to say?

N.L.R.