standards and specifications discussed. Physiological mechanisms are well summarized; the diagrams are clear. The description of abortion techniques is perhaps out of place since such operations should be performed only by those fully instructed and experienced in the procedures and for this purpose more detail would, in any case, be required. But this is a minor criticism. Overall, the book is to be recommended and the price of the paperback edition (18 shillings), refreshingly reasonable.

Serotonin

By I. H. PAGE. Pp. 143. Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers; Chichester: John Wiley, 1969. £3 15s.

The author was one of the discoverers of serotonin more than twenty years ago, and he has continued to make important contributions in this field. This book bears the imprint of his close personal involvement. As the Preface and Introduction tell us, it was written not as a comprehensive review, but to express a point of view. Dr Page has thus reserved the right to include and exclude material with a free hand, and this he has clearly done. It is likely that the book will be most profitably read by those who are sufficiently interested in serotonin to have points of view of their own.

The generous tributes to other workers are a pleasing feature of the book. An exception to this is the disapproval of the 'stark and forlorn' 5HT (short for 5-hydroxytryptamine) introduced by the late Sir John Gaddum in lieu of the author's 'mellifluous and warm' serotonin. However, serotonin appears rather a restrictive term in view of the many biological roles attributed to it. Those listed in the concluding final 'overview' include transmitter functions in the nervous system, regulation of gastrointestinal motility and of cardiovascular functions, pineal control of rhythmic activities, influence on the body temperature, and effects on the carbohydrate metabolism in invertebrates. Even more varied is the involvement of serotonin in pathological processes. In addition to its established role in inflammatory

conditions, carcinoid and dumping syndromes, serotonin is being studied in migraine, Down's syndrome, rheumatic diseases, and as a teratogenic agent.

Dr Page writes with gusto and in a colourful style. As he says, 'the book has been written to be read, and in a short time at that!'

The Surgical Management of Ulcerative Colitis

By F. C. WALKER. Pp. 147, illustrated. London: Butterworth, 1969. £2 10s.

In the preface the author states that this book is an attempt to present the experiences which have emerged from the treatment of about 400 patients afflicted with ulcerative colitis. He has done this most admirably in eight chapters. The first is an introduction dealing briefly with clinical, pathological and etiological features of the disease and the second and third chapters deal with the diagnosis and the complications respectively. The fourth chapter mentions the indications for surgery and choice of operation and the remaining four chapters deal with the operation, the ileostomy, ileostomy dysfunction and the cost of colectomy. At the end of all the chapters there are useful references.

This book makes absorbing and enjoyable reading. It would prove useful to the postgraduate trainee surgeon and to all the nurses who have to deal with the unfortunate sufferers in the management of such things as ileostomy, prolapse, recession, skin excoriation and the techniques of fitting the various appliances.

Professor D. N. Walder in writing the foreword states that the author, by his understanding, knowledge and devoted care, has helped to rehabilitate the unfortunate patients who have been demoralized by a life dominated by the nearest WC and has thus become their friend. After reading the book and particularly after looking at the photograph of a group of happy patients on page 129, I would like to echo Professor Walder's sentiments.

This book can be thoroughly recommended to all who have to deal with unfortunate sufferers of the disease.