Radiotherapy in Clinical Practice, edited by H.F. Hope-Stone. Pp. vi + 454, illustrated. Butterworths, London, Boston, Durban, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1986. £45.00.

This is a text book which aims at comprehensiveness, and indeed at least mentions the rarest of conditions. So it is not an introduction for the beginner, but a reference for the student and a reminder for the practising radiotherapist. Techniques are described in sufficient detail, and there is an excellent chapter on the treatment of benign diseases by radiation. The conventional chapter on radiation physics (too short to be useful) is mercifully absent.

The marvel is that fifteen different authors should agree so closely about a subject which 25 years ago was as contentious as any in medicine.

On the scientific, as opposed to the practical side we have M.L. Sutton arguing unanswerably that any new form of treatment (neutrons or what you will) must be tried at two dose levels: otherwise it will never be possible to judge whether the therapeutic ratio is more favourable than it is with conventional photon treatment. Years of sterile dispute over the place of hyperbaric oxygen and recently neutron beams in radiotherapy could have been avoided if this point had been grasped earlier: and now of course it seems obvious. The value of neutrons and of hyperfractionation are discussed by most of the authors, with the verdict always: no proven benefit. Let us hope that two dose-levels are used in future trials.

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Recent Advances in Radiology and Medical Imaging, No. 8, edited by R.E. Steiner and Thomas Sherwood. Pp. v + 213, illustrated. Churchill, Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £45.00.

Recent advances in radiology are coming thick and fast and it is hardly surprising and quite justifiable that the intervals between successive volumes are diminishing rapidly. Professor Steiner is joined by Professor Sherwood, a previous contributor, in editing the thirteen chapters comprising the eighth edition.

Six chapters deal with the very latest imaging techniques (magnetic resonance, computed tomography and digital angiography and radiography) and all are extremely lucid accounts of their current roles. Recent advances in interventional radiology in the cardiovascular system and urinary tract are described by David Cumberland and Michael Kellett and pinpoint where future advances are likely in these exciting and rapidly developing areas.

There is much of interest in the other five chapters: a classification of arthritis which will be new to many readers, the pathogenesis and radiological appearances of the adult respiratory distress syndrome, and updates on paediatric imaging, contrast media and the barium infusion examination of the small intestine.

The selection of topics, while keeping faith with the reader

and genuinely examining recent advances, is also broadly based.

The book therefore will have wide appeal to radiologists just as previous editions have done. Because of their increasing sub-specialization, radiologists have come to regard 'Recent Advances' as an ideal method of keeping up to date in those areas outside their own particular fields of interest. The latest edition should be read, and will be read by almost all radiologists, junior and senior, wherever their place of work.

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Tutorials in Surgery 2, Second edition, F.G. Smiddy. Pp. vii + 319, illustrated. Churchill, Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £14.95.

The five books in Mr Smiddy's series, *Tutorials in Surgery*, are now a well established feature of the postgraduate surgical training scene. Volume 1 has already been updated and this book is the second edition of volume two. It covers five broad topics, namely general principles, general surgery, urology and arterial and venous surgery.

In the preface to the book the author states that the main changes in the second edition have been to bring the text up to date and to add a few diagrams in appropriate places. How well have these changes been undertaken?

There is no doubt that the text, though didactic, reflects modern thinking. A remarkable task when one considers the pace of change and the necessary delay between writing and publication. On the other hand the diagrams are not quite as good as they could be, especially when trying to illustrate operative techniques. Thus in those showing the management of biliary stricture, figures 2.8A and 2.8D, have been transposed. Even if they had not been the 4 diagrams are difficult to interpret, especially if one is not familiar with the problems associated with biliary structure and the necessary operative procedures. This point is reinforced by figure 2.20. Even though I am thoroughly familiar with the technique of extraperitoneal colostomy, I just cannot understand the diagram meant to illustrate it.

These, however, are minor criticisms and should not detract from the clear and concise way in which Mr Smiddy writes about surgery. Each topic covered really is a 'tutorial' on the subject. Those studying for higher examinations in surgery would be well advised to invest in this series, especially when Mr Smiddy goes to such lengths to ensure that the information is continually updated.

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