

# Book Reviews

**CANCER OF THE COLON AND RECTUM. Its Diagnosis and Treatment.** Fred W. Rankin, and A. Stephens Graham. First Edition. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas. 1945. x + 358 pages. Price \$5.50.

The recent publication of a second printing of Rankin and Graham's *Carcinoma of the Colon and Rectum* attests to the esteem in which it is held by the profession.

It is a work to which the internist may turn for what he must know about diagnosis. The surgeon who only occasionally does this sort of work may lean heavily upon it with confidence and even those whose "series" are large would do well to check their procedure occasionally against General Rankin's advice to prevent the creeping in of bad habits of omission or commission.

Part I on general considerations presents a lucid review of the anatomy of the region and concludes with a valuable section on the neglected subject of physiology. A chapter on incidence occurrence and etiology follows with sobering statistics on the frequency of the disease and the rôle of the polyp in its origin.

Perhaps the most valuable chapters are those on pathology, symptoms and diagnosis. They are presented in classical fashion, are richly illustrated and contain little of a controversial nature.

Such material is to be found, however, in "operability and prognosis" particularly in the basing of the latter so much on microscopic grading especially of biopsy specimens. The former depends upon "surgical judgment" often rather than a set of rules. The authors counsel courage and common sense after consideration of all the data obtainable.

Their choice of operation favors, for the right side a two stage procedure with end to side ileocolostomy by the senior author's closed method, followed by a subsequent resection of the right half of the colon. They admit preference of some for a one stage procedure which, if done, they believe should be complemented by ileostomy proximal to the anastomosis. For the left colon obstructive resection is endorsed without preliminary cecostomy. The methods of others are generously discussed but disapproved. For the rectum they choose the one stage abdomino-perineal or perineo-abdominal operation. They mention the anterior resection but emphasize that it is indicated for the rare favorable case or for the patient who is adamant against the permanent colostomy.

All this unquestionably represents the best opinion of ten years ago but recently it has been announced that the Miller-Abbott tube and the sulfonamides have revolutionized the surgery of the lower bowel. Today, one stage resection and primary anastomosis seems to have won out for either side of the colon while the Miller-Abbott tube provides the safety valve for the right side and sometimes, if there has been no obstruction, for the left side as well. Most surgeons would agree with the text, however, about the abdomino-perineal as the most useful procedure for rectum and recto-sigmoid but admit an increasing interest in the reports of the anterior resection.

Hodges' chapter on radiotherapy reports some astonishing results which he counterbalances with the advice that surgery is preferable. If radiotherapy really has anything to offer the inoperable case it deserves more attention than it now receives.

The chapter on preoperative and postoperative treatment

was carefully written to include every detail of this important phase of the care of patients with large bowel cancer. Since it was written, Dr. Rankin's lack of enthusiasm about intraperitoneal vaccines has been confirmed and the sulfonamides and antibiotics have proven so effective as to rob postoperative peritonitis of much of its threat. Simultaneously, the emphasis on fluid administration has shifted to the colloids. Although the importance of the crystalloids has not been forgotten, today plasma, the casein hydrolysates and blood receive much more attention as the dangers of hypoproteinemia are better appreciated. The Miller-Abbott tube, by solving so much of the decompression problem, is a third development which has radically changed current treatment.

Spinal anesthesia by the method of serial injection has been improved enough to overcome most of the objections held against it a few years ago. The increased number of experienced anesthetists made available by the demobilization of the army and navy restores this valuable method to our consideration. No one can deny that spinal anesthesia makes it easier to do the nicer work demanded of surgeons today.

The last part of the book begins with an interesting historical sketch. It then proceeds to give a step by step description of all the procedures used in large bowel surgery. Each one is evaluated by the authors who supply the evidence that condemns or endorses the operation and who state in what circumstances it should or should not be used.

The post-war surgeon has new weapons with which to attack his old problems. To counsel him as to how these should change his accepted procedures in the field of large bowel cancer, Rankin and Graham are peculiarly qualified by their capacity for sound criticism and clear writing. The second edition of their work will be looked forward to with keenest anticipation.

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**CANCER OF THE SCROTUM IN RELATION TO OCCUPATION.** S. A. Henry. London: Oxford University Press. 1946. 158.

This monograph is well illustrated with photographs of scrotal cancer and of men engaged in various occupations in which there is a special liability to it. The author has collected an immense amount of statistical and historical information about this form of cancer and is able to draw upon his own experience as an Inspector of Factories. He makes an interesting attempt to assign the most likely etiological factors to the various occupations, and in addition to such well established factors as soot, tar, pitch, and lubricating oils he attaches importance to "heat with radiations" and considers this agent to be of importance not only in such occupations as makers of glass, furnacemen and rollers, smiths and skilled forgemens, but also to such occupations as that of grocer and butcher, where the liability to excessive heat with radiations is not very obvious. The later sections of the book, dealing with the time necessary for the production of the primary growth, contain by far the most elaborate study that has ever been made of the range of the incubation period of induced cancer in man.

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