BOOK REVIEW

SURGERY OF THE UPPER ABDOMEN. By JOHN B. DEEVER and A. P. C. ASHHURST. Volume II. SURGERY OF THE GALL-BLADDER, LIVER, PANCREAS, AND SPLEEN. Philadelphia. P. Blakiston's Son & Company, 1914.

IN 1909 the first volume of this excellent book was reviewed in "The ANNALS," the concluding statement being: "The book is a notable contribution to one of the most important departments of modern surgery."

The lapse of four years before the appearance of the present volume is explained by the authors' desire to supplement their personal experience by familiarity with the voluminous literature bearing upon the surgery of the gall-bladder, liver, pancreas, and spleen.

It may be said at once that they have accomplished their task in a most thorough and satisfactory manner. If there is a single contribution to the subject entitled to be considered as of first importance which has escaped their notice, it has also escaped the notice of the reviewer. Evidence of their large personal experience is abundant. Statistics and bibliography are comprehensive, thorough, and well up to date. The four years have obviously not been wasted. The teachings throughout are sound, and the views of the authors are not dogmatically announced, but are supported in each instance by sound and usually convincing reasons. Illustrative cases, taken chiefly as are many of the statistics from the service at the German Hospital, add much to the value of the text. If any particular portions of the book were to be chosen for especially favorable mention, those on the gall-bladder and bile-ducts, and on the general diagnostic considerations in pancreatic disease, might be selected.

In the former, the teaching as to the treatment of stone in the common duct will serve to illustrate sufficiently the statement that there has been a successful effort to avoid both rashness and undue conservatism, and that a decent regard is shown for the opinions of others. They say: "It has long been considered unwise to operate when there is acute obstruction of the common duct; it is the opinion of the majority of surgeons, in this country at least, that it is better to tide the patient over the attack under medical treatment than to

BOOK REVIEW

subject him to the danger of an operation when so acutely ill." They then consider the non-operative treatment during acute obstruction, and add: "But though, as we have said, the majority of surgeons still hold to this teaching, we have been forced by our own experience to the conclusion that in the long run *immediate operation during an attack of acute obstruction of the common duct is attended by less danger than is delay*. If operation is delayed the patient runs the risks of cholangitis, cholæmia, with the gravest form of sepsis; not to mention perforation of the common duct or the formation of almost inoperable adhesions; or the indefinite persistence of chronic jaundice with its dangerous hemorrhagic tendencies.

"Our experience with immediate operation is so far too limited for us to be willing to erect this as a rule of practice, but while many times there has been cause to regret not operating during the stage of acute obstruction, never yet has there been cause to regret prompt relief of the obstruction by operation."

Many similar instances might be adduced, but this will suffice.

The 52 illustrations are uniformly good and useful. The make-up of the book is excellent. The almost unqualifiedly favorable opinion expressed as to the first volume is certainly applicable to this one in even larger measure. The authors and the profession are to be congratulated on the completion of a book likely, for a time at least, to be almost indispensable to the practitioner of surgery.

J. WILLIAM WHITE.

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ANNALS of SURGERY

227-231 S. 6th Street

Philadelphia, Penna.