Books

Reconstructive procedures in surgery Edited by P Gilroy Bevan. (Pp. 454; illustrated: £30). Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1982.

The Editor of this unusual book has brought together a group of acknowledged experts, who have clearly been invited to express their own personal opinions of details of reconstructive surgical procedures, rather than to paraphrase the world literature and thereby produce a rather turgid collection of information already available in standard textbooks. Although only one quarter of the book is devoted to matters of gastrointestinal interest, those chosen topics are all relevant to the forefront of development of gastrointestinal surgery. The collective experience and wisdom of the contributors makes this a superb, forthright account of many of the controversial points in current surgical gastroenterology. This section alone justifies publication of this book.

In this day of the specialist surgeon, with urology and cardiovascular surgery rapidly receding from the general surgical scene, it is refreshing to read, again with clear cut text and simple line diagrams, the latest opinion of experts in renal and ureteric reconstruction, cystoplasty, and complicated repairs of urethral strictures. Surgery of cardiac valve replacement and myocardial revascularisation also makes fascinating reading for the mature surgical gastroenterologist, even though he is more likely to have these procedures carried out on himself than to practise them.

To the keen pre-Fellowship candidate, this book is strongly recommended, as he will obtain a wealth of up-to-date technical knowledge and also, perhaps more importantly, a rich dowry of surgical wisdom.

BRUCE TORRANCE

Basic mechanisms of gastrointestinal mucosal cell injury and protection Edited by J W Harmon. (Pp. 415. Illustrated. \$58.75.) Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins. 1981.

This is a very good book, consisting of contributions by participants invited to a symposium in Maryland, USA. There are 29 chapters divided into seven sections consisting of one to seven chapters. The Editor, Dr J W Harmon, starts each section with a pithy account of the contents, which are then presented well and in a logical sequence. Topics are put into perspective by historical reviews or citation of background information, and the discussions range from basic new information to aspects of laboratory and clinical techniques. The presenta-

tions are clear, and many have good bibliographies and illustrations. A strong feature is the combination of strength in basic mechanisms and clinical aspects. The contents of each section are under the following headings: basic mechanisms of cell injury and kinetics; sequelae of mucosal ischaemia; pathophysiology of mucosal injury by bile acids and other barrier breakers; the role of prostaglandins in mucosal injury and cytoprotection; the role of bicarbonate in mucosal injury and cytoprotection; the possible roles of mucus gel and the unstirred layer in cytoprotection; and mechanisms of mucosal defence. A wide section of gastroenterologists, from those involved in basic research to clinical practice, will find the book interesting and valuable, and I recommend it highly.

ALAN BENNETT

Clinics in gastroenterology—alcohol and the GI tract Edited by Carroll M Leevy. (Pp. 502. Illustrated. £9.75.) W B Saunders, 1 St. Anne's Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex. 1981.

In view of the steady increase of alcoholism in most western countries in recent years, it seems appropriate at this time that an entire issue of *Clinics in Gastroenterology* should be devoted to alcohol and the gastrointestinal tract. Dr Leevy, editor of this volume, has chosen subjects for individual chapters with skill and flair, reflecting the range of interest and developments in research in all aspects of the effects of chronic alcohol ingestion on gastrointestinal, hepatic, and pancreatic function.

Perhaps the most interesting sections of the book are the chapters dealing with the effects of alcohol on intestinal absorptive function and the utilisation of nutrients, cell replication, and the metabolic effects of ethanol on the liver and alimentary tract, and the important developments suggesting that host immunity and genetic background may be factors in the pathogenesis of alcohol-associated disease.

The book is well rounded by a series of chapters on the clinical aspects of alcohol-related gastrointestinal disease with sections on oesophageal lesions, gastritis, pancreatitis, hepatitis, cirrhosis, primary hepatic cancer, and cancer of the pancreas. A final brief chapter on alcohol and drug interactions is also a valuable contribution to the subject.

In keeping with the *Clinics in Gastroenterology* series as a whole, this volume is characterised by good presentation and drawings, although the format of individual chapters perhaps varies to a greater extent in this volume than in some of its predecessors.