
Six years separate the last two editions of Maingot's Abdominal Operations. This two-volume set remains a classic reference work. It is beloved and appreciated by large numbers of surgeons throughout the world and I have no doubt that it will remain so despite the cost of £90-05. The work remains a good buy and must still be recommended, although, on reading both this edition and its predecessor, I am increasingly of the opinion that a firmer editorial hand is now needed to weld the contributions of the 133 eminent authors into a less unwieldy, less repetitive, and less patchy work. I suspect that most surgeons, whether in training or in established practice, find that the strength of the book has lain, and continues to lie, in its description of the technique of operative surgery. The editor states in his Preface that fully 80% of the text and illustrations are devoted to the minutiae of present-day techniques. I would like to see this figure pushed closer to 100% in the next editions (and I am sure that there should be further editions), and would appreciate a reduction in the sometimes discursive accounts of modern diagnostic procedures and the clinical and pathological aspects of many lesions of the abdominal viscera. These aspects of surgical practice are better dealt with elsewhere and in my view detract from the real purpose of Abdominal Operations. Although many good new illustrations have been added, many of the older line-drawings, endoscopy plates, and photographs of operative specimens need to be replaced or dropped.

I have no doubt that many devotees of Abdominal Operations will disagree violently with any suggestion that the book be modified. I still feel that it represents the best buy of its kind on the market, but the time for more stringent editing has arrived.

JOHN DAWSON

Books received


D C CARTER