Correspondence

This Philadelphia: disease management of the invited commentators such as Schraut, Peck, Telander, Martin, Nicholls, Johnston, Kelly, and Belliveau that help us to judge the rival merits of the different techniques and methods of management.

There is a small section on the experience with a balloon developed and used in the Mayo Clinic but no reference or even condemnation of the other types of balloon tamponade, such as is used in Santa Barbara, California, nor is there reference to the magnetic continent device as developed in Erlangen, Germany. In so comprehensive a book perhaps these should have been included.

The book ends with an account of stoma therapy which, like the account of the balloon occlusive device, is somewhat parochial. The last sentence in this chapter and therefore in the whole book reads as follows: 'A thorough knowledge of all the approaches available to the patient after proctocolectomy is of great importance if patients are to be offered the best and the most current enterostomal care.' I presume they mean newest; most current is impossible.

The literary style of the book is reasonably uniform considering the many authors involved, the hand of professional English editors is evident. Perhaps such professionals can be forgiven for misspelling of some proper names. Bryan Brooke whose suntanned handsome face is the only non-clinical photograph in the book has so many eponymous references he will probably forgive them for misspelling his name on page 189 and Lief Hulten may not be too upset on finding his name misspelt in the references on page 210.

The illustrations are good in parts but some are very bad and are clearly reproductions of illustrations in articles that should never have been reproduced. The employment of a single artist to illustrate the whole book would have been a worthwhile investment.

The book represents a labour of love and enthusiasm. It is a must for the surgical obsessionist and should sell well.

R J NICHOLLS


This volume is the 42nd in the series of monographs of the Physiological Society. Since 1953, this publishing venture has produced some important contemporary reviews of various aspects of physiology, but this is the first time that it has sponsored the translation of a scientific classic. The editorial board are to be congratulated on the choice of both subject and translator; if this volume is the prototype for future classic monographs, the omens are propitious.

Claude Bernard is best known in this country for the concept of 'le milieu interieur'; his classic work on the secretion and action of pancreatic juice is not widely known, and the home team of Bayliss and Starling take the credit for 'discovering' pancreatic secretion. Bernard's work included studies of pancreatic secretion in birds, fishes and reptiles, as well as observations on living animals and the bodies of decapitated criminals, and its range will surprise contemporary physiologists, who tend to cling to a


This book on office management of colon and rectal disease faces the anticipated problem of defining the limit of its brief. The authors have tried to keep it within the stated province but from time to time encroach beyond, and in places the book tends towards a full textbook of colorectal disease, particularly for cancer and diverticular disease. When it does so, detail and breadth are lacking.

The authors are backed by a large experience in the field and give much useful information. The book is beautifully produced with excellent diagrams including some colour plates and illustrations of operative procedures. There is a good account of colonoscopy and of local anaesthesia. Its weakness, however, is a somewhat anecdotal style with insufficient numerical data. In this regard the account of inflammatory bowel disease is inadequate and elsewhere controversial statements are made without evidence – for example, on haemorrhoids, fissure and anorectal sepsis. Pruritus ani is regarded as a disease rather than a symptom and rectal prolapse is included in the chapter on 'Rare problems of the colon and rectum.' There is no account of pelvic floor disorders, including incontinence or of infections and diarrhoea. Terminology of polyps is confusing, as is the classification of fistula in ano. References are of variable quality and include a fair number of personal communications. While some sections and the illustrations are good, others are indifferent.

J ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS