

DISEASES OF THE

Colon and Anorectum

Edited by

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PREFACE

*"Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
Nor the last to lay the old aside."*—ALEXANDER POPE

"Ideas have consequences."—ARISTOTLE

THE FOREGOING were some of the motivating influences that guided the creation of this textbook. To accomplish this goal, one had to look at many problems at one and the same time. The primary purpose was to create a practical, progressive and complete, though not an encyclopedic, textbook on the function and diseases of the colon and anorectum. The constant aim has been to present newest concepts as well as established principles and procedures in a comprehensive form upon which the medical student and the resident in training of surgery can build, and at the same time to provide sufficient detail to make the work of practical importance to these very same persons years later. While this book is directed primarily to the general surgeon who performs anorectocolonic surgery and the proctologic surgeon with a general surgical background, generous attention is also paid to the diagnostic and therapeutic needs of the gastroenterologist, internist, pediatrician and general practitioner.

The sectional organization of the material, though still far from ideal, is nevertheless comprehensive and realistic. In the absence of a special chapter on history, the historical aspects of many of the subjects are dealt with briefly by the individual authors, thus affording the valuable perspective of historic development. Stress has been laid on the basic sciences and on the relationship of other specialties to the function and diseases of the large intestine. An attempt has been made to (1) preserve each chapter as an independent whole and (2) to integrate the chapters into a working unit. As is common in all multi-author books, there is bound to be some repetition and overlapping of important data in different chapters. To a limited degree these are an advantage since few individuals will read the entire book at any one time. Furthermore, they provide an opportunity for depicting different methods or ideas of appraisal of a given subject.

With minor exceptions, the authors of the various chapters are teachers or active workers, and all are authorities in their subjects. Most of them are

distinguished surgeons or internists with broad experience while some of them are research workers who have made notable contributions to our surgical and medical knowledge.

The surgical procedures have been profusely illustrated because of the belief in the Chinese proverb that one picture is worth more than 10,000 words. The preponderance of the techniques described are those that have proved successful in the hands of the contributors. Emphasis has been placed primarily on surgical judgment rather than on surgical virtuosity. All surgical procedures have been considered to be of major importance; terms such as "intermediate" or "minor" operations have been avoided.

My task in arranging this book was simple, consisting largely in the preservation of objectivity and the prevention of undue overlapping. The contributors were most helpful by offering constructive criticism and suggestions. Nowadays, with the greatly accelerated tempo of basic research and the development of new therapeutic agents, a comprehensive work is possible only through joint authorship.

My genuine gratitude goes to all contributors to this textbook and I congratulate them on a job superbly done. I also extend my thanks to the staff of W. B. Saunders Company for their fine cooperation.

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