NEUROSURGERY

IN

GENERAL PRACTICE

By

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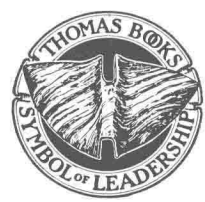

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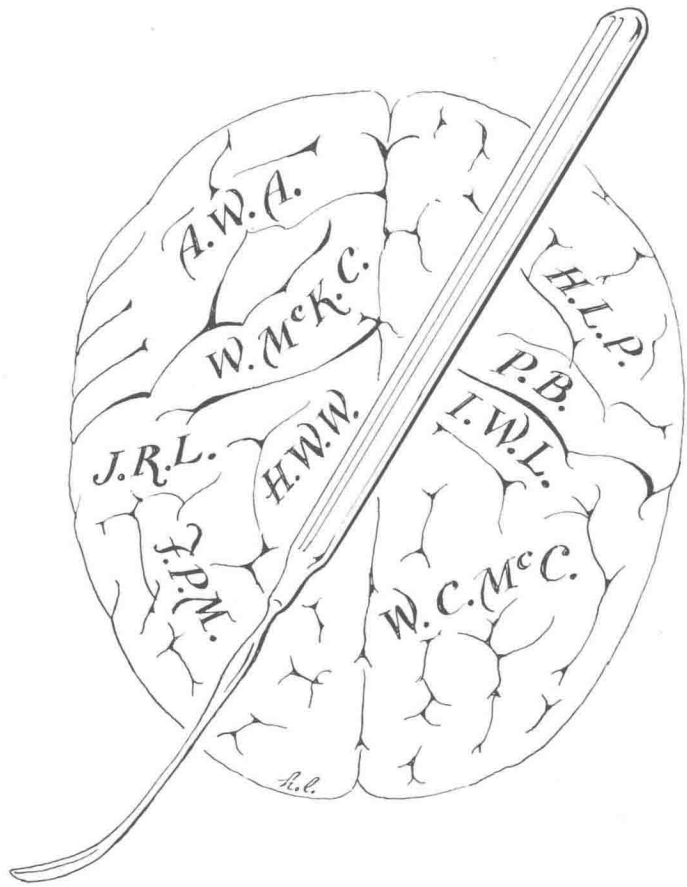

Preface

THE PURPOSE of this book is to help the general practitioner with his neurosurgical problems. Some patients, who may later pass into the hands of the neurosurgeon, are stricken suddenly and the family doctor is the first to see them and treat them. How should he proceed? Others present themselves with less acute conditions involving the nervous system in which there is a possibility of successful neurosurgical intervention. How can these particular neurosurgical problems be recognized? The answers to these questions should be provided here.

Problems such as these frequently confronted the author when he was for four years a general practitioner, with one colleague, in a town with a population of two thousand persons and a large country district. Many situations arose in which a book of this type would have been most welcome and helpful. Fortunately, such books were available in other branches of medicine. Only those who have been in this position of awkward responsibility can appreciate how grateful one can be for a clear concise description of the problem and how to proceed with it.

When a working diagnosis has been satisfactorily established, the physician may decide that neurosurgical consultation and treatment is required, and he may propose to send the patient where this is available. However, the patient and the relatives may inquire concerning what is likely to be done at the neurosurgical centre. They may also wish to know about the risks and ultimate outcome in the event that the working diagnosis is confirmed. It is for this reason that there has been some consideration of neurosurgical diagnostic procedures, what they hope to demonstrate, and the risks involved in doing them.

Many authors have dedicated books to the general practitioner, but few have succeeded because they have been unable to put themselves precisely in his position. Usually too much is written, for it is difficult to resist the urge to appear erudite. A mere recital of facts is also useless. On the contrary, a picture must be drawn and concrete examples must be given. For this reason many case histories are offered, especially of those conditions in which neurosurgical intervention is particularly likely to be successful. However, occasional flaws are inevitable in a series of case histories, for the material from each must be used in its entirety. This can

be seen in a few illustrations which otherwise would not have been used.

A summary which can be consulted in haste is available, for there are occasions when there is no time to read a lengthy dissertation.

All of this means that the author must act as a filter, letting through only information likely to be of value. This involves judgment, especially judgment as to what to omit. It is hoped, however, that what is found here corresponds to what is generally regarded as good sound neurosurgical opinion. Purely personal views have very little place in this type of context. There is nothing in this manuscript that will be of interest to the neurologist or neurological surgeon; they already know what is written here. The student in medical school has his own teachers but in the crowded curriculum, there is little time to develop the subject. Therefore, if this book succeeds in its aim, it will be of value almost entirely to the general practitioner of medicine. It is my sincere wish that he will find himself able to agree as to its value, and, if not, that he will explain what is lacking.

It will be noted that references are not extensive. These have been selected, as far as possible, with a view to availability and completeness. Short or highly technical articles have been omitted from the bibliography.

I record with pleasure my special thanks to Miss Muriel C. Allardice, my secretary. Without her perseverance and unfailing good humour this work could not have been completed. Dr. Evan Barton was good enough to read the manuscript, making suggestions likely to be of benefit to a general medical man reading this book.

The publisher, Charles C Thomas, never lost his serenity in spite of the anxious moments I caused him.

For permission to reproduce from my published papers I am indebted to: the *American Journal of Surgery, Diseases of the Nervous System, Medical Clinics of North America, Journal of the Iowa State Medical Society, Tice's Practice of Medicine, Surgical Clinics of North America, Annals of Surgery, Surgery, Gynecology & Obstetrics* and *Annals of Otology, Rhinology and Laryngology.*

Robert Burton described his *Anatomy of Melancholy* in terms that are applicable here. He said it was "a cento, a patchwork, laboriously collected out of divers writers but *sine injuria.*" As Macrobius said "Omne meum nihil meum—it is all mine and none is mine."

ADRIEN VER BRUGGHEN

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