tendency to be more radical in surgical disease. Chapter five is a delightful account of the so-called “kindergarten cabal” against Dr. Wangensteen, who had been named the Chairman of the Department of Surgery at the young age of 32 years. Chapters six through nine detail his enormous influence in the areas of intestinal obstruction, cancer, and peptic ulcer disease.

Chapters ten, eleven, and twelve are devoted to the Minnesota program, the education of a surgeon, and the history of medicine, all of which are very important parts of Dr. Wangensteen’s approach to education. As he often said, “The teacher who succeeds in instilling a love and lust for learning in his students projects his influence to unborn generations,” and “my only parting reminder to teachers is that young men are eager and keen to learn. So ardent in their desire to make their own contribution to the patrimony of knowledge, that all the teacher needs to do is provide them with the opportunity and not stand in their way....”

The final chapters describe Dr. Wangensteen’s role in the establishment of the surgical forum at the Clinical Congress of the American Board of Surgeons. This idea came from Dr. Wangensteen’s abiding conviction that surgeons, particularly academic surgeons, had to have proper laboratory experience to become a complete surgeon. While the emphasis on the animal laboratory in Dr. Wangensteen’s program may have been too great, there can be no argument that the modern day surgeon needs a sound fundamental background in science to practice effectively. As stated in the epilogue in Dr. Wangensteen’s own words: “My role has been essentially that of focusing the sunshine of encouragement upon the efforts of my colleagues. In the lively leaven of an atmosphere fostering inquiry, no one was afraid to come forward with a novel idea, no matter how strange or unfamiliar it may have sounded. In the crucible of experiment and with friendly doubting Thomases looking on, the new idea could be given the acid test. The stages of a new idea are multiple. Many are stillborn. But every new suggestion deserves at least a trial of being blown upon the hope there may be sparks in the ashes.”

The book has captured Dr. Wangensteen’s essence and aptly describes him as L’Etoile du Nord (the star of the north) which is the motto of his home state, Minnesota.

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Carotid endarterectomy: Principles and techniques

Carotid endarterectomy: Principles and techniques is a monograph by a noted neurosurgeon. The initial chapter, which details indications for operation and basics concerning the surgical technique, is well-written and contains 248 references. Nonetheless, it is not all-encompassing. Carotid ultrasound is mentioned in passing, undoubtedly reflecting the author’s dependence on angiography. Transcranial Doppler and electroencephalography are covered more completely. The author’s approach to patients with intraluminal thrombus and postoperative deficits runs counter to the dogma expressed in most medical centers. The introductory chapter is followed by a series of radiographic studies and clinical vignettes that emphasize the author’s approach to many clinical problems.

The strength of this monograph is in the chapter emphasizing meticulous surgical technique. The photographs are, in general, excellent, and the line drawings that accompany them clear and unambiguous. The technique described is, by and large, standard with few exceptions. The shunt that is used is smaller than most. An inordinate emphasis is placed on external carotid endarterectomy. The arteriotomy is closed almost exclusively without patch. Nonetheless, the author claims a 2% morbidity and mortality rate and thus must be respected for his views.

This monograph would be more complete if it contained statistics concerning Dr. Loftus’ operative experiences. His variations in philosophy and technique are sufficiently different from my own as to tweak my interest regarding his results. Whereas his results are referenced, this requires extra effort on the part of the reader that I believe is properly the responsibility of the author.

Carotid endarterectomy: Principles and techniques is a well-bound book with clear printing and excellent pictorial reproductions on high-grade glossy paper. Housestaff and beginning practitioners will enjoy this book by virtue of its excellent chapter on techniques. This monograph, like many that have preceded it, will be of interest, but unfortunately adds little to the knowledge of the experienced endarterectomist.

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