

Dealing with Bedsores

Bedsores. By B. N. Bailey, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. (Pp. 130+vii; illustrated. 50s.) London: Edward Arnold. 1967.

As the population ages, as geriatric units become more crowded, as nursing shortages increase, and as more and more patients survive for many years after severe spinal injury or with other gross neurological deficits, so the numbers exposed to the risks of bedsores become larger.

This timely monograph, which must be the first of its kind, gives a full account of the aetiology and pathology of bedsores, discusses their prevention, describes the fundamental principles of plastic surgery which form the background of their surgical treatment, and gives scrupulous practical instructions for their management. The book is designed for the general surgeon who is frequently called upon to deal with these common problems, and here the author must be complimented for his clear descriptions. The section on the planning of plastic flaps, in particular, can be warmly commended.

The book is fully and well illustrated by clear diagrams and many photographs illustrating the principles and the results of treatment. This monograph should prove of wide interest, not only to surgeons but also to doctors and nurses who are concerned with the care of the elderly and chronic sick, and to the staff of intensive care units. It is a worthy contribution from Stoke Mandeville Hospital, which has an established reputation in the fields of both plastic surgery and paraplegic care.

HAROLD ELLIS.

New Novak

Novak's Gynecologic and Obstetric Pathology. With Clinical and Endocrine Relations. 6th edition. By Edmund R. Novak, A.B., M.D., and J. Donald Woodruff, B.S., M.D. (Pp. 696+xvi; illustrated. £7.) London: W. B. Saunders. 1967.

The sixth edition of this standard work is heartily welcome. Yet it is with regret that the reviewer notes the increasing size and weight of the volume. Emil Novak's first edition in 1940 was available to the soldier returning from the wars as a lucid companionable book into which he had breathed his own personality. The sixth edition, nearly 700 pages long, has become much more a book of reference. As such it will of course be most valuable.

The co-authors point out that they have adhered closely to Emil Novak's original format. This is correct; but as the book has grown the enlargement of the section on obstetrical pathology has somewhat altered the balance, while the section on cytopathology is almost a monograph in its own right. Respectively, these sections are by R. E. L. Nesbitt and J. K. Frost. They comprise nearly a quarter of the total letterpress. A detailed critique of a work of this size is hardly possible within the compass of a normal review. The sections on ovarian tumours continue, as in previous editions, to be quite masterly. The discussion of endometriosis in chapter 30 is perhaps handicapped by the wide separation in the text between endometriosis and the related subject of adenomyosis (chapter 12). Vulvar pathology remains confused and confusing despite the authors' courageous attempt to rewrite this section.

The illustrations are profuse and well arranged in relation to the text. For fine histological detail monochrome printing rather than reproduction in colour is favoured, but 18 colour plates are included. These are of rather variable quality and their appearance alongside superlatively good monochrome photographs lends support in some instances to the preference for the latter. Figure 9-18 on p. 176, depicting endometrial cancer in a myomatous uterus, is printed upside down. The reviewer recalls Emil Novak's pleasure when presented with this photograph and regrets its inversion.

The foregoing criticisms are unimportant. This book is internationally famous and will remain so. It is an essential reference work for the pathological laboratory, while its repeated emphasis on clinical factors will continue to enthral clinicians.

W. I. C. MORRIS.

History of the Apothecaries

The Royal Apothecaries. By Leslie G. Matthews. (Pp. 191+xiv; illustrated. 25s.) London: Wellcome Historical Medical Library. 1967.

The author of this book undertook a long, arduous, but fruitful research into historical records dating from the Norman Conquest to the present time. The result is a valuable work containing a multitude of interesting facts backed by 30 pages of references and notes. The reader is thus able to trace how

the office of royal apothecary arose and why the functions attached to it gradually changed.

The Norman and Plantagenet kings were very fond of spiced wines, and chose members of the group of pepperers and grocers who imported these spices to provide what they needed. These men, who in the time of King John began to be called spicers, also imported drugs from the East, and a number of them who took the trouble of learning how to make preparations from these drugs soon formed a special section of the Grocers' Company called "Apothecaries." The monarch chose a personal apothecary and also one for his household. In the reign of Henry VIII the term "Gentleman Apothecary" was bestowed on the royal official. The function of the royal apothecary was to prepare drugs according to the prescription of the royal physician, who might order any of the following: electuaries, potions, syrups, confections, laxative medicines, clysters, suppositories, cataplasms, gargles, baths (either complete or partial), fomentations, embrocations, etc. He might well be kept busy if the king were ill. The emolument of the apothecary was about £40 a year (often a year or more overdue), but gifts of land or houses were common and more than compensated for the small salary.

In Tudor times there was a greater demand for perfumes that called for the distillation of fragrant herbs, while during the period of the Stuarts the apothecary had to provide the necessary materials for the embalming of the bodies of deceased monarchs. The formation of the Society of Apothecaries and the gift of a Charter by James the First in 1617 were notable events, and it was in this reign that the royal apothecary was given the duty of preparing the special oil used at the coronation. This oil was (and still is) made according to the prescription of Sir Theodore de Mayerne, and contained "orange and jasmine flowers distilled in benjamin oil, distilled oil of rose and cinnamon, prepared benzoin, ambergris, civet, musk, and spirit of rosemary." No wonder the author states that it has a rich and peculiar fragrance.

After the passing of the Apothecaries Act in 1815 the status of the apothecary rose and the royal apothecary often had a medical qualification. The designation of "Surgeon-Apothecary" still continues in Great Britain, but the function is now medical.

This book will be valuable to all who are interested in the history of medicine or pharmacy, and every medical library will need to possess a copy.

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Books Received

Review is not precluded by notice here of books recently received.

Introduction to Gastrointestinal Physiology. By George B. Jerzy Glass, M.D. (Pp. 204+xiv; illustrated. 74s. 6d.) London: Prentice-Hall International. 1968.

Experimental Chemotherapy. Vol. 5. By R. J. Schnitzer and Frank Hawking. (Pp. 459+lxvii; 261s.) New York and London: Academic Press. 1968.

Colour Atlas of Diabetic Retinopathy. By A. Dolenek and A. Takac. (Pp. 92; illustrated. 168s.) Year Book Medical Publishers, Chicago. 1968.

Biomedical Aspects of the Laser. By Leon Goldman, M.D. (Pp. 222+x; illustrated. 105s.) Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd. 1968.

Modern Trends in Pharmacology and Therapeutics. Edited by W. F. M. Fulton. (Pp. 372+x. £4 5s.) London: Butterworth. 1967.

Sensory Inhibition. By George von Békésy. (Pp. 240+xxv; illustrated. 81s.) Princeton University Press. London: Oxford University Press. 1968.

Decision Making in National Science Policy. A Ciba Foundation and Science of Science Foundation Symposium. Edited by Anthony De Reuck, Maurice Goldsmith, and Julie Knight. (Pp. 310+xiii; illustrated. 60s.) London: Churchill. 1968.

Modern Trends in Orthopaedics—5. Edited by W. D. Graham. (Pp. 236+ix; illustrated. 75s.) London: Butterworth. 1967.

The Formative Years. By Gordon Trasler, John Bowlby, Penelope Leach, Colin Hindley, Basil Bernstein, David Edge, and David M. Downes. (Pp. 71+i. 13s. 6d.) B.B.C. Publications. 1968.

The Surgery of the Common Congenital Cardiac Malformations. By Christiaan N. Barnard and Velva Schrire. (Pp. 179; illustrated. 50s.) London: Staples Press. 1968.

Principles of Nuclear Medicine. Edited by Henry N. Wagner, jun., M.D. (Pp. 896+xvi; illustrated. £11 14s.) London: W. B. Saunders. 1968.