

AFTER-TREATMENT

A guide to general practitioners, house-officers, ward-sisters, and dressers in the care of patients after operation. By H. J. B. ATKINS, D.M., M.Ch., F.R.C.S. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Ltd., Oxford. 252 pages. 47 illust. Price 15s.

Change is in the air. The medical curriculum is under review. Is the medical student taught that which is useful in after years? How much of his time is wasted in attempting to absorb academic facts and fanciful theories? Is he given the right bias towards medicine? especially its prophylactic side. All these questions and many others crowd in one's mind when one looks at this book on after-treatment. For here is a subject about which the student is taught absolutely nothing, yet it is an aspect of his medicine that he will be called upon to practise daily.

The ritual in the London medical schools is that the house officer should pick up this important part of medicine from the ward sister if he treats her tactfully. Not all ward sisters re-act to this technique. Admittedly, some of the old sisters knew more than the doctors, but many of the younger have not the knowledge. But why this haphazard method of educating just those few selected men who happen to be in charge of wards run by old sisters. Why isn't the medical student taught to give an enema? Why can't he make a bed? Many medical men have never done either. This book therefore fills an empty space; a no man's land in the curriculum of the student is explored in an attractive and useful way.

Written as a guide to general practitioners, house officers, ward sisters and dressers, in the care of patients after operation, it makes no claim to be a book of reference for the experienced surgeon. Early post-operative treatment, operation wounds, scars and burns, the ear, nose and throat, the thyroid and breast, the chest, the abdomen, the genito-urinary system, amputation, fractures, and the nervous system are covered, and there is a useful appendix on writing reports, and appearing in court.

Every individual surgeon has his favourite form

of after-treatment, and there is therefore much very controversial matter in each chapter. For instance, gum saline is recommended to be given intravenously (page 8). Many surgeons and physiologists think this is dangerous, and that it should never be used. Nothing is said about cocainising the nose and passing a Ryles tube nasally, although Senorans evacuator is illustrated for post-operative gastric lavage. On page 11, the rectal method of giving fluid is stated to be ideal. There is no detailed description of method. Some sisters can give patients quarts of fluid using the Murphy technique, but no mention is made of this. On page 12, a German proprietary drug is referred to by its proprietary name, and not by its B.P. name. Perhaps it is because we have a particular antipathy to the advertising pharmaceutical pedlar that reference to proprietary names of recognised drugs makes one see red.

Is it necessary to purge patients post operatively? The author says Yes. We feel No. There are, however, more ways than one of getting to the top of a hill.

This book takes one to the destination, but not always by the paths we personally would choose. It should prove to be of tremendous assistance to those about to embark upon a surgical career, especially for those to whom the book is addressed.

LEUKAEMIA IN ANIMALS

By DR. JULIUS ENGELBRETH-HOLM. Oliver & Boyd, Ltd., Edinburgh, 1942. Price 15s.

Since 1932 the Lady Tata Memorial Trust has supported, in seven different countries, workers on "diseases of the blood, with special reference to leukaemia." One of the most distinguished and energetic of these workers is Dr. Engelbreth-Holm of Copenhagen, whom the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Trust invited to prepare a review of our knowledge of the etiology of leukaemia. It is appropriate that such a review should come from Denmark, for serious experimental study of leukaemia dates from the work of the Danes, Ellerman and Banz, who in 1918 showed that leukaemia of fowls was transmissible not only with cells, but by means of cell-free filtrates. The

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