

GYNAECOLOGICAL SURGERY

Bonney's Gynaecological Surgery. 7th ed. Ed. by D. Macleod, M.S.(Lond.), F.R.C.P.(Lond.), F.R.C.S.(Eng.), F.R.C.O.G. and J. Howkins, M.D., M.S.(Lond.), F.R.C.S.(Eng.), F.R.C.O.G. Pp. xiii + 743. Illustrated. R12.60. London: Cassell. 1964.

This classic, first published 53 years ago under the authorship of Sir Comyns Berkeley and Victor Bonney, has now been brought fully up-to-date by two of Bonney's pupils, upon whom the mantle of Bonney has fallen at the Master's own behest, before his death in 1953. Bonney's original drawings have been retained, and additional ones have been drawn by a new artist in a style closely approximating to that of the original.

There are three excellent additional chapters, on blood transfusion, water and electrolyte therapy and radiotherapy, by acknowledged experts in their respective fields.

In a fitting epilogue to this magnificent book, the new authors write the following words, which would surely have been echoed by Bonney himself: 'There are various roads to success in the calling of surgery, but the pride and pleasure of the true craftsman in his craft is, of all sources of happiness the most enduring, and though fate and fortune be malign, this remains certain: that, because perfection is impossible, he, dauntless, who steadfastly strives to reach it, will always receive honour'.
R.P.D.

PROGRESS IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Progress in Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology. 2nd ed. By T. L. T. Lewis, M.B., B.Chir.(Camb.), F.R.C.S.(Eng.), F.R.C.O.G. Pp. viii + 753. Illustrated. R8.00. London: J. & A. Churchill Ltd. 1964.

Only 8 years have elapsed since the first edition of this book was published, yet the advances in certain aspects of obstetrics and gynaecology have been so rapid that, in this second edition, it has been necessary to devote new chapters to a number of topics. Thus, in addition to extensive revision of subjects previously dealt with, excellent reviews are given in new chapters on placental insufficiency, the vacuum extractor, vaginal smears to assess hormone secretion, oral contraception and chromosome anomalies. The availability of the potent new progestogens has also prompted the inclusion of a chapter on endometriosis, covering the disease from all aspects.

There are a few relatively minor criticisms: No mention is made of the possible teratogenic effect of oral antidiabetic compounds; the babies of diabetic mothers have been shown

not to lose appreciably more fluid neonatally than normal babies (p. 133)—the increased weight is due to true macrosomia; no mention is made of the role of renal biopsy in elucidating underlying renal disease as a causative factor in many cases of toxæmia of pregnancy.

There are copious references to the literature. Some of the older or less important ones might well have been omitted, and the space saved by such pruning could have been used to give the title of the article referred to, as well as the customary details, a useful practice adopted by many recent authors. The references following the chapter on acute renal failure are disappointing, however; no mention is made of the increasing use of peritoneal dialysis instead of haemodialysis in certain cases. In the chapter on carcinoma of the cervix, too, a notable omission is the article by the late Prof. James Louw on the very poor prognosis in cases where the glands are involved, as illustrated by his fairly large series.

The first edition of this book has been a Bible to many a candidate for higher examinations in obstetrics and gynaecology. The new edition, despite the criticisms mentioned above, will no doubt continue to serve the same purpose to an increasing number of readers, since it is even better than the first.

R.P.D.

ABDOMINAL DECOMPRESSION

Abdominal Decompression. A monograph. By O. S. Heyns, M.A., D.Sc., F.R.C.O.G., F.I.C.S. Pp. xiv + 113. Illustrated. R3.00. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press. 1963.

It all started with an experiment on a patient in doubtful labour, who received a scoline injection in order to paralyze the abdominal muscles and, contrary to expectation, laboured very rapidly: this led to the idea of relaxing the abdominal muscles by decompression. Professor Heyns discusses in his monograph the effects and possibilities offered by abdominal decompression, viz. facilitation and pain relief in the first stage of labour; reduction of the resistance of the birth canal to the descent of the presenting part in the second stage; extraction, by suction, of the placenta, leaving the uterus very firmly contracted; abolition of pain in primary dysmenorrhoea; relief from back-ache and the improvement of foetal oxygenation in both labour and pregnancy, with possibly more gifted babies being born in this way.

To those wishing to experiment with this technique a serious word of warning is sounded by the author, to adhere closely to the equipment and methods advocated by him in this monograph. In fact, any doctor who is using, or intends using, abdominal decompression should read this book carefully.

J.N. de V.