setts. This book is an account of his medical education at Yale, based on a diary of his
day-to-day activities and feelings during medical school.

The author describes the events at Yale which were significant in his medical
training, as well as the practical and ethical issues which one encounters in and after
medical school. These accounts reveal to us his personal struggle with the obstacles
which many physicians have to overcome, such as death, dying, and suffering.

The setting of this volume is the 1980s. Well written, the book is of interest to anyone
involved in the training of physicians. Because the setting is Yale University School of
Medicine, this account is of special interest to those who are familiar with the school.
Many references to Yale’s medical school occur in this book and familiarity with the
Yale System of Medical Education, which involves no required tests, allows greater
appreciation of many of the author’s remarks.

Naturally, the book begins with a discussion of the medical school admissions
process, an event to which all medical students, past and present, can relate. The
clinical education of a medical student is emphasized. Very little mention is made of
the basic science courses taken in the first and second years, those such as biochemistry
and physiology.

The topics of the first and second chapters are, respectively, anatomy and clinical
tutorials. Dr. Reilly describes in vivid detail his first encounter with a cadaver, one of
the first great rites of passage of all physicians. His description of the professors, the
anatomy rooms, and the instructional videotapes really gives a graphic impression of
the study of anatomy at Yale. In the second chapter, he discusses a major issue which
arose several times during his medical training: Should medical students be addressed
as doctors in the presence of patients?

The major part of this book is concerned with the author’s experiences on the wards
during his third-year medical rotations and his fourth-year subinternship. A great deal
of medical terminology and jargon is used, and in each instance the terms are explained
well to the uninitiated. In these chapters, the author reveals his personal experiences in
dealing with death and in handling a physician’s responsibilities. Here the author also
speaks of one of the medical system’s major faults, the lack of time and energy doctors
may devote to the task of caring.

It is appropriate that the book ends with a chapter entitled “The Match,” an event of
great concern to the fourth-year student. Dr. Reilly discusses the difficulty of choosing
a specialty and the factors which shape a medical student’s postgraduate training
decisions. In this last chapter, the author describes the culmination of his medical
training, receiving his first choice, internal medicine, at the Boston City Hospital.

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THE BIOLOGY OF HUMAN AGEING. Edited by A.H. Bittles and K.J. Collins. New York,
Cambridge University Press, 1986. 280 pp. $37.50.

In 1984, the Society for the Study of Human Biology and the British Society for
Research in Ageing held a joint symposium to consider aging from an interdisciplinary
perspective. Although Bittles and Collins fail in their attempt to integrate the wide
range of research presented at this conference, the papers themselves provide some
interesting insights into the various aspects of aging, from the cellular to the societal.
The book opens with a discussion of aging as an evolutionary process and continues to examine the genetics of senescence. The papers that follow present an increasingly broad view of aging. The second section of the book addresses the various issues involved in estimating maturity from the skeletal structures, and the two final sections examine the phenomenon of aging from a societal perspective, including a discussion of the demographic structure of the aging American population and an analysis of the Soviet viewpoint on societal trends in aging.

Although each of the papers is interesting in itself, and the editors have organized the topics logically, the book does not read as a cohesive work. In a collection such as this, the reader usually expects some type of commentary to link together the ideas presented in each article, but these transitions are missing. The editors attempt to provide a sense of continuity in an introductory passage describing the internal framework around which these articles are organized, but by the time the reader is in the middle of the third or fourth paper, this framework has been long forgotten.

While the editors were unsuccessful in creating a feeling of continuity and direction in their presentation of these papers, the book still provides several interesting perspectives on aging and presents a paper or two for everyone with an interest in aging, from the cell biologist to the demographer.

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PLASMA FIBRONECTIN. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION. Edited by Jan McDonagh. New York, Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1985. 269 pp. $59.75.

The phylogenetically ubiquitous plasma and tissue protein, fibronectin, is an increasing target of investigators from a wide range of medical disciplines. Over the past five years, a detailed understanding of its molecular biology, physical chemistry, and physiologic function has been achieved. This volume of the Hematology series attempts to present these advances in fibronectin research in a coherent form. As the first such compendium, it is most welcome.

The editor has focused on plasma fibronectin, a rather specious restriction given the role of subendothelia tissue fibronectin in the hematologic process, which is in fact covered. The function of fibronectin in neoplasia is, however, judiciously excluded. While the volume contains a degree of redundancy, particularly in the structure chapters (one through three), this will prove useful to those of us less familiar with the intricacies of protein chemistry. Chapters five through nine apply structural data to the physiologic processes of cell surface interaction, clot formation, platelet activation, and phagocytosis. Wound repair is then covered, as an afterthought, in the last chapter.

What emerges is an eminently readable account of this very important protein. One minor disappointment was the book's failure to devote sufficient space to the growing use of monoclonal antibodies in the assessment of fibronectin function and in the discrimination of variant forms.

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