



NELSON: A MEDICAL CASE BOOK

By A-M. E. Hills
(Spellmount,
264 pp, £20)

Nelson's death in 1805 was one of the most famous deaths in British history. Yet, as the author of this new book notes, every one of Nelson's biographers has accepted and been content with the account of his death, *The Authentic Narrative of the Death of Lord Nelson*, written by his last surgeon, William Beattie, in 1807. Having carefully investigated every

available primary source, Dr Mills has concluded that Beattie has not provided 'the full picture'. She now brings together what, until now, has been missing from that picture.

In this well-illustrated and attractively produced book, Dr Hills has set out not only details of Nelson's death but a full account of his medical history in a form that will be familiar to everyone who has been taught to clerk the admission of a patient to hospital. The book begins with a comprehensive family history and proceeds to a full recital of all the many past illnesses, the astonishing number of injuries and how and when they were inflicted before carefully describing the last and fatal wounding. This clinical report is supplemented by a

psychiatric assessment of his character and personality.

Much of the information is set out conveniently in lists and tables. It is astonishing that this small 5ft 6ins frame and seemingly thin weak body was able to sustain so many damaging insults in a life of only 47 years.

This book is not a comfortable read nor does it present an exciting narrative. Yet it is eminently successful. It does what it says on the tin. It is an admirably constructed and informed case record. It is comprehensive and authoritative. In future, no one writing on Lord Nelson will fail to consult it.

M McCrae
History editor, The Journal, RCPE

Myre Sim Grants

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Further details and application forms are available from:

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