

BOOK REVIEW

Handbook of Anesthetics.—Fifth Edition. ROSS AND FAIRLIE. Revised by R. J. Minnitt. 353 pages, 103 illustrations. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1940. Price \$4.00.

The fact that this Handbook has survived four previous editions speaks for its popularity. The fifth edition is revised by R. J. Minnitt with chapters on local and spinal anesthesia by W. Quarry Wood. Chapters on vinethene, cyclopropane, carbon dioxide absorption, therapeutic use of helium, oxygen, and carbon dioxide have been added to the previous edition of the handbook as written by Ross and Fairlie.

The book is written in a brief, comprehensive manner. The reader is not burdened with many branches of anesthesia which are experimental in nature and specialized technics which have not been used extensively. On the other hand, considerable emphasis is placed on certain drugs which are little used by anesthetists of this country. For example, thirty-five pages are devoted to chloroform and ethyl chloride. In contrast, only three pages are given to the intravenous use of evipal and pentothal.

The drugs outlined by the author for

use in spinal anesthesia seem to be incomplete. Although metycaine and pontocaine are used extensively in many clinics, these two agents are not mentioned in the text. Contrary to the common belief that procaine is the least toxic drug to use in spinal anesthesia, the author makes the following two statements which are a bit confusing. In regard to the use of tropicocaine he states, "It is an agent which is particularly suitable for spinal anesthesia, as fewer unpleasant effects have probably followed its use than that of any other drug"; and later, "Procaine, while being subject to the ordinary sequelae associated with spinal anesthesia, does not appear to produce them so frequently as do the other spinal anesthetics."

The clinical anesthetist will find numerous suggestions throughout the book which can be used to advantage in his daily work. The descriptions and use of British apparatus should prove interesting to the American anesthetist as they furnish an insight into the manner in which various anesthetic procedures are carried out in England.

As in the past, this book should prove to be a useful guide to students of anesthesia.

J. K. P.