

## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Obstetric Analgesia and Anesthesia.*

By FRANKLIN F. SNYDER, M.D.: Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Associate Professor of Anatomy, Harvard Medical School. Price \$6.50. Pp. 401, 114 figures, and 18 tables. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Company, 1949.

The title of this book is misleading so that if one purchased the book for its implied content, he might be disappointed. There are two main divisions in the material presented: (a) "Respiratory Injuries of the Child," and (b) "The Treatment of Pain During Labor." In the introduction the author gives a still better description of the first section: "The history of the respiratory organs before birth and the principal types of pathologic alterations which involve them—*asphyxia*, *atelectasis* and *pneumonia*." The title of the book would not suggest the inclusion of this subject.

Considerable valuable information is gathered in this first section of the book, including laboratory and clinical data gathered by the author as well as detailed summaries of the work of other investigators. The second portion of the book could be divided into (a) analgesics and (b) anesthetics. The latter section would be of little value to an anesthetist since it is merely a recapitulation of the pharmacological properties of the anesthetic agent plus the inclusion of accounts of investigations other than the author's. In the first section of the book, the author briefly mentions original work which he had done on the effect of various anesthetic agents on the newborn and the process of labor, but these data are not discussed at all in the sec-

tion on anesthetics. There is no consideration of the technic of administration of anesthetic agents.

The outstanding criticism of the book is its unnecessary length due to the author's verbosity. It would seem that the length of the book could be reduced to 250 or 300 pages by conciseness and the elimination of repetition; although the information contained in the first part of the book is good, the reader tires quickly. Summaries of chapters are extraordinarily long. For instance the chapter on *asphyxia* is fifty-three pages long, eight and one half pages of which are summary; the chapter on chloroform is twelve pages long, four of which are summary.

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*Elementary Anesthesia.* BY WILLIAM N. KEMP, M.D.: Consultant Anesthetist, Children's Hospital, Vancouver, B. C. Price \$5.00. Pp. 289 and 100 figures. Baltimore, The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1948.

The stated purpose of this book is to supply "for the busy undergraduate or the busier practitioner" a discussion of the methods and equipment most commonly used in the administration of general and regional anesthesia. To fulfill this purpose, a text should be written in a clear and concise style; it should present the physiological and pharmacological aspects of anesthesia in such a fashion that it will stimulate one not primarily interested in anesthesia; it should present the methods of anesthesia with which a student should be familiar and which a practitioner might be able to use; finally,

it should not incorporate little used methods nor those methods requiring the attendance of an experienced anesthetist; above all it should exclude controversial material wherever possible.

In the opinion of the reviewer, this book fails to accomplish its purpose. In the chapter on physiological considerations, data and figures are presented as obtained from physiology textbooks published in 1942. A brief review of the literature of the past five years would reveal that many of these statements are no longer acceptable. Contradictions are abundant throughout the book. On page 68, it is stated that vinethene should be given only by the closed system. Yet on page 155, a method for giving vinethene by the open drop method is presented. Early in the book, the author recommends the omission of morphine from the pre-anesthetic medication and substituting in its place barbiturates. However, throughout the chapters whenever pre-anesthetic medication is mentioned morphine or another opiate is always included. In considering secretory depressives only scopolamine is mentioned. In a table 60 cc. of 2 per cent procaine is mentioned as the maximum dose to use; however, later it is recommended that brachial plexus blocks be done with 50 to 80 cc. of 2 per cent procaine.

While most of the figures are drawn from other sources, some of the original figures would be confusing to the student. Unjustified and dogmatic statements would give the student of anesthesia a completely false picture. For example, "endotracheal anesthesia is the method of choice whenever inhalation anesthesia is required," again, "with the advent of propyl thiouracil, thyroidectomy will soon become a rare operation."

Considerable time is spent on theories not generally accepted. For ex-

ample, much is written about the dangers of the removal of too much carbon dioxide in closed carbon dioxide absorbing systems.

In the discussions of anesthesia for intrathoracic operations there is little mention of augmented or supplemented respiration, although much time is spent discussing controlled respiration. In this discussion the author gives the impression that it is always necessary to have third or fourth plane anesthesia to have controlled respiration.

The organization is not good; the same aspect of a subject may be mentioned many times throughout the book. One chapter is spent in attempting to perpetuate the syndrome of status lymphaticus, a subject that does not seem to be germane to the purpose of the book.

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*Synopsis of Anesthesia.* By J. ALFRED LEE, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., M.M.S.A., D.A.: Consultant Anesthetist to Southend General Hospital, Southend Municipal Hospital, Rochford. Anesthetist to Tilbury Hospital, Runwell Hospital, East Ham Memorial Hospital, Essex County Council. Assistant Anesthetist to King George Hospital, Ilford. Late whole time Anesthetic Specialist, E.M.S. Price \$4.00. Pp. 230 and 42 illustrations. Baltimore, The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1947.

This small book, with type to match, was written over two years ago as a ready source of reference and a quick means of revision for students, residents, practitioners, and candidates for the Diploma in Anaesthetics in Great Britain. As such it was considered by British reviewers an "admirable book," containing "much reliable information." For American readers it will be interesting chiefly as a guide to British theory and practice. But