

The Anesthesiologist's Bookshelf

Edited by MEREL H. HARMEL

Thoughts on Modern Anaesthesia. By C. LANGTON HEWER. London, J. A. Churchill, 1970. Pp. 62. \$5.50.

In this thin and reasonably priced paperback, C. Langton Hewer, late Editor of *Anaesthesia*, gives us his critical appraisal of some aspects of present-day practice. All of the ingrained beliefs of past generations of anesthetists are aired here. Thus, it is observed that anesthesia has become too complex; polypharmacy prevails. As a distinguished visitor to the author's clinic once remarked, it seemed to him that the operation was simply an unimportant incident in an incredibly complicated anesthetic technique which started hours before surgery and continued for days afterwards. Hewer himself offers the view that while cardiac resuscitation has become more effective arrest is nonetheless more frequent. He asks, in connection with reports concerning awareness during anesthesia, shouldn't the reaction of patients be, "If you cannot even keep us unconscious, anaesthesia must be in a pretty bad way."

In the same vein, we hear the old refrain that ether is still the safest agent of all. Chloroform is looked upon with more than mere nostalgia. Fluoroxene is dismissed in a few words as having no compensating advantages over other agents. In Britain, spinal analgesia and now epidural anesthesia are still regarded with suspicion; the notorious lawsuit of Wooley vs. Roe (1953) is resurrected to explain this unshakable attitude. In commenting on monitoring during anesthesia the attitude is taken that while the electrocardiograph is a fascinating instrument it can be of only doubtful value to the singlehanded anesthetist.

Admittedly, the chapters comprise a series of disjointed observations which hardly aspire to the title of essays. But the reader will derive considerable pleasure in perusing them—a short flight of reading when the opportune time comes. This is a semi historical and anecdotal treatise, classically British in style, attesting to the author's long experience and wisdom as a clinician.

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Elements of Pediatric Anesthesia. Second Edition. By C. R. STEPHEN, E. W. AHLGREN AND E. J. BENNETT. Springfield, Illinois, Charles C Thomas, 1970. Pp. 202. \$8.00.

The dust jacket of Stephen, Ahlgren and Bennett's "Elements of Pediatric Anesthesia" states

that "the monograph is designed to present in a practical manner problems encountered by a practitioner when confronted by patients who are not small adults."

This statement seems to suggest that a practitioner, when confronted by any difficult problem in pediatric anesthesia, has only to pick up this small handbook; read a superficial paragraph or two about the difficulty; and emerge prepared to apply skillfully the accumulated wisdom or pediatric anesthesia to his little patient.

"Elements of Pediatric Anesthesia" has some assets. The organization of its chapters is logical and effective. The references for each chapter are excellent and well selected. But the liabilities of the work outweigh its assets. The style is awkward and therefore difficult to read. The discussions are so superficial as to appear trivial. The book emerges as a badly written residents' manual with a well selected reading list.

The anesthesia public has a great need for much more than this book has to offer. No text on pediatric anesthesia exists that offers an authoritative presentation of the underlying areas of pediatric anatomy, pharmacology and physiology, followed by a careful discussion of the issues imposed by clinical pediatric anesthesia. The presentation should include a thorough explanation of the best current methods of managing the patient.

What is available for the anesthesiologist who should have an authoritative, literate reference that deals in depth and maturity with the special problems of pediatric anesthesia? There are only two sources, among all that has been written, that I recommend to colleagues and residents as worthwhile discussions of pediatric anesthesia: Robert Smith's "Anesthesia for Infants and Children," and Rackow and Salanitre's review, "Modern Concepts in Pediatric Anesthesiology" (*ANESTHESIOLOGY* 30: 208-234, 1969). I have previously, and at great length, discussed Smith's book. Rackow and Salanitre present a balanced, scholarly and well-written discussion of the most important issues and concepts in pediatric anesthesia; this is accomplished in 25 pages, citing 240 excellently selected references.

A comparison of the sections on temperature regulation in the new book by Stephen *et al.* and the article by Rackow and Salanitre is revealing. Both use approximately 2,000 words. The article presents a full and complete discussion. Historical perspective is included, with a succinct discussion of the pertinent physiology, including the phenomenon of cold stress. The effects of events surrounding anesthesia and operation are evalu-

ated. Measures which should be taken to meet the temperature problem are considered, and there is thorough discussion of the hyperpyrexia syndrome as it had been elucidated by 1969.

In contrast, the 2,000 words in the book are rambling and colloquial, without mention of history, with little discussion of physiology, and with no mention of cold stress.

At present, Rackow and Salanitro's review, written in 1969, remains the best general discussion of pediatric anesthesia. I am informed that Dr. Rackow spent a six-month sabbatical leave working on the article. There will not be an excellent textbook on pediatric anesthesia until one of the several people qualified by interest and experience to write such a book is willing to invest the time necessary for its creation.

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Mechanical Artificial Ventilation. A Manual for Students and Practitioners. By TERUNG W. HENONIMUS, III. Springfield, Illinois, Charles C Thomas, 1970. Pp. 160. \$8.50.

The second edition of this compact, concise book essentially achieves its object to present concepts of mechanical ventilatory support to both student and practitioner. It is well planned, and is divided into two sections: I) When (indications), What (types of ventilators) and How (clinical applications); and II) Why (Physiology of spontaneous and mechanical ventilation, humidification and airway). The text of 130 pages has 321 references, which is somewhat excessive for the type of reader for whom this book is designed.

Although the author presents a wide variety of useful information, it was embarrassing for the reviewer to see "Respiratory Distress Syndrome of the Newborn" classified as alveolar capillary block, to find that salt-water drowning caused pulmonary edema and that fresh-water drowning was omitted, and to discover that "shock lung" following trauma was not included. The ventilator circuit diagrams are redundant in a book which is small and directed primarily to the clinician. Concepts of increasing the period of inspiration with a Bird ventilator by decreasing sensitivity are against currently accepted principles; and stumbling upon the shunt equation without explanation of the symbols might prove disconcerting to the reader.

The book's shortcomings appear to be in its editing; its content does convey basic principles of mechanical artificial ventilation.

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Biology of the Immune Response. By PETER ABRAMOFF AND MARIANO LAVIA. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1970. Pp. 492, illustrated. \$12.95.

The co-authors and eleven contributors have provided a review that emphasizes immunology rather than immunochemistry or immunopathology. Aside from chapters on antigens, immunoglobulin structure, and subcellular sites of antibody formation, the book presents the biologic aspects of immunologic phenomena (antibody induction and production; immunologic memory; immunologic protection and injury; theories of antibody formation; immunosuppression; and transplantation immunity). The result is a well-organized, integrated textbook with extensive reference lists at the end of each chapter. It should benefit not only the student of immunology but also the professional who needs to "catch up."

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From time to time books are received which may be of general interest but do not warrant review. Where indicated, the editor may make short comments. The following are representative of such books.

Anaesthetics for Nurses. By JOAN K. HOBKIRK. London, Bailliere, Tindall & Cassell Ltd., 1971. (Published in U.S.A. by Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore, 1970.) Pp. 168. \$5.50.

For the nurse and other hospital personnel dealing with patients who have been anesthetized—British style.

An Introduction to the Study of Disease. By WILLIAM BOYD. Philadelphia, Lea and Febiger, 1971. Sixth edition. Pp. 584. \$8.50.

Written for assistants and technicians in the health-related professions. Clear and well-done.

The International Handbook of Medical Science. A Concise Guide to Current Practice and Recent Advances. EDITED BY DAVID HORROBIN AND ALEXANDER GUNN. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970. Pp. 744. \$16.00.

A concise, all-inclusive, limited guide to current practice and recent advances.

Emphysema and Chronic Bronchitis. By STANTON BELINKOFF. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1971. Pp. 108. Cloth \$10.50; paper \$6.75.

For the layman and general practitioner.

Pharmacological Facts and Figures. By F. LEMBECK AND K.-FR. SEWING. Translated by H. Heller and D. R. Ferguson. Berlin-Heidelberg, Springer-Verlag, 1969. Pp. 111. \$3.00.

Useful to the medical student and house officer. Concise.