Book Reviews

Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment. By M. A. KRUPP AND M. J. CHATTON. Los Altos, Lange Medical Publications, 1975. Pages: 1044. Price: $13.50.

This volume is one of 17 designed as a "concise medical library for practitioner and students." It is not a primary textbook of medicine, but a detailed outline of the physiology, clinical findings, diagnosis, prognosis and current therapy for disease entities. Each section or chapter is followed by a small up-to-date bibliography for further consultation.

For the resident or practicing anesthesiologist, most chapters are not germane. The chapters on Fluid and Electrolyte Disorders, Heart and Great Vessels, Blood Endocrine Disorders, and Poisons are filled with pertinent information that can be rapidly scanned and applied to patient care.

The chapter on Fluid and Electrolyte Disorders lucidly discusses the physiology of water, anion and cation balance and compares the normal and abnormal states. For example, hydrogen ion concentration and its control, integrating ventilation with kidney tubular excretion, are succinctly discussed in three pages.

The Heart and Great Vessels diversely covers the entire spectrum of heart disease from the common congenital maladies through acquired heart disease, then goes into the diagnosis and treatment of hypertensive cardiovascular disease, arrhythmias and myocardial infarction.

Each chapter is concise, easy to read, and offers an excellent bibliography for further study. In conclusion, *Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment* is a ready source of general information for any practitioner.

STEVEN R. WYTE, M.D.
Department of Anesthesiology
University of Colorado
Denver, Colorado 80220

Anesthesiology and the University. By N. M. GREENE. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1975. Pages: 174. Price: $10.00.

Dr. Nicholas Greene's book is a recitation of the factual development of anesthesiology, and especially its relationship to the university. It is also a rather warm and interesting statement of a personal point of view towards these events.

Dr. Greene divides his discussion into six chapters based on the chronological development of anesthesiology as a university discipline. I find no disagreement with his description of events and share the same bias as Dr. Greene to a large extent. However, having had the privilege and opportunity of witnessing a small segent of the essays that he entitles "The Growth of Medical Professionalism," "The Years of Maturation" and "The Present," one is tempted to identify in perhaps an excessive way with the points that Dr. Greene makes.

Essentially, he reviews the eclectic as well as the turbulent and somewhat non-medical, even ludicrous, beginnings of this specialty, and develops his review to the point where professional competence and ultimately intellectuality take their place in the development of anesthesiology.

The strong commentary of Dr. Greene on the relationship of anesthesiology to the university and in turn, the university's responsibility to anesthesiology is well worth the attention of people who have academic experience and inclinations. It is a strange combination, of interest alike to the layman, the clinical anesthesiologist and the academic anesthesiologist. One could argue considerably with Dr. Greene's projections into the future; but until the future comes, his opinion is certainly one worth listening to because of his vast experience and competence.

There are some trivial points to take issue with, and one should mention them only to indicate that this review is a serious analysis and not an endorsement, despite the vested interest in so doing of the reviewer. For example, on page 46, Dr. Greene gives the year of Dr. Rovenstine's death as 1950; the correct date is 1960. Since Dr. Greene was a graduate student of Dr. Henry K. Beecher, one can understand the panegyric for Dr. Beecher that appears on pages 47 and 48. There are many others who would share his view. There are many who would not.

All told, this is an excellent book of small size and large ideas. It is recommended for the professional anesthesiologist, the academic anesthesiologist, and also people interested in university activities.

E. M. PAPPER, M.D.
School of Medicine
University of Miami
Miami, Florida 33152

Pain Relief. By J. G. HANNINGTON-KIFF. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1974. Pages: 178. Price: $15.50

This little book is an excellent synthesis of the neurophysiologic basis of pain, the psychological and behavioral response to pain, and the principles of pain relief. As each of the available techniques for the provision of pain relief is reviewed, the mechanism by which that particular modality provides relief is pointed out, so that all forms of therapy are indicated as having a rational basis when utilized appropriately. In those forms of pain relief in which efficacy is unexplained, the author takes the liberty of providing a possible, yet

rational, explanation, again on the basis of the underlying pathophysiology. For such a brief book, the scope is truly amazing, with virtually all types of pain and all forms of therapeutic modalities reviewed, at least synoptically. Particularly intriguing is the final chapter, entitled "Ahead of Knowledge," in which the author speculates on the possible implications of recent developments in research on pain and pain relief.

"Pain Relief," for all of the personal opinions of the author, provides a fine introduction to pain syndromes and their management, and is an excellent primer for anyone interested in becoming involved in the management of pain. Because the book originates from Great Britain, there are minor differences in emphasis with respect to certain problems: For example, in the management of certain sympathetic dystrophies, an inordinate amount of time and space is devoted to the use of intravenous regional sympathetic block with guanethidine, a technique introduced in England by the author. While his may be an excellent alternative to sympathetic blockade provided by the injection of a local anesthetic at the appropriate ganglia in situations where nerve blocks may be contraindicated, *i.e.*, in patients on anticoagulant therapy, nonetheless the efficacy of repeated sympathetic blocks in the majority of the sympathalgias is somewhat overshadowed. Similarly, the use of large volumes of local anesthetic with corticosteroids in the management of prolapsed intervertebral discs is outdated by some 15 years; and the author's statement that "results with local anesthetic blocks and the other types of blocks are disappointing in acute herpes zoster" is simply contrary to the published facts. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the material in this book, including the references, is current and pertinent, and this reviewer enthusiastically recommends it to those interested in this previously somewhat neglected subject.

ALON P. WINNIE, M.D.
Department of Anesthesiology
University of Illinois Hospital
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Neuropoisons. EDITED BY L. L. SIMPSON AND D. R. CURTIS. New York, Plenum Publishing Corporation, 1974. Pages: 306. Price: $25.00.

This work is *not* intended for the reader seeking a cursory discussion of the active principle of all toxic plants. Only reserpine, curare, nicotine, atropine, neurotoxic amino acids, convulsant alkaloids and ergot alkaloids are covered (with a comment or two about some other compounds such as benzpenicillin). But these substances are discussed in detail, and bountiful references are given.

The editors' stated intent was to identify those poisons for which there is a large measure of clinical or research interest. The veratrum alkaloids and grayanotoxins fit comfortably under such an umbrella and might have been included. The veratrum alkaloids occur in plants that belong to the tribe *Veratrea*. The hypotensive effect of some veratrum alkaloids has long been known, and their pharmacologic actions have been detailed. More recent studies point out the usefulness of veratrum alkaloids as tools in the study of excitable membranes. Grayanotoxins are the toxic principles obtained from the leaves of various plants that belong to the family *Ericaeceae* (*e.g.*, rhododendron). Only recently it has been shown that grayanotoxins have highly specific actions in increasing resting sodium permeability of excitable membranes. It is likely that this group of toxins will become very useful in characterizing membrane sodium permeability. But then, everyone probably has one or two pet toxins they would want included. What is significant about the publication is that nearly all the known facts about the toxins cited are presented, or the reader is told where the untold facts can be found.

The pages also contain heavy doses of information about suspected neurotransmitters of the peripheral and central nervous system. This is because all the poisons mentioned have been shown to affect the synthesis, storage, release or postsynaptic action of one or more of the transmitter candidates.

Volume 1 of this series discusses selected neuropoisons of animal origin in the same fashion as Volume 2 considers poisons from plants. There is no suggestion that Volume 3 is in the making, but Volumes 1 and 2 will be continuously updated. Not a "must" on the reading list of anesthesiologists, the book nonetheless contains tidbits about curare and atropine that would be of interest. Research workers in the neurosciences will find it to be a valuable reference source.

JAMES E. HEAVNER, D.V.M., PH.D.
Department of Anesthesiology
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195