

Book Reviews

Scientific Foundations of Anesthesia. Second edition. By C. SCURR AND S. FELDMAN. Chicago, Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc., 1974. Pages: 590. Price: \$27.50.

In this collection of concise reviews by an impressive array of authors from both sides of the Atlantic, the editors have been eminently successful in achieving their goal. Unlike the specialized texts, this book should prove extremely useful to the clinician without time or inclination to search for updated physiology. The style is informative without being dogmatic and provides a welcome and generally neglected emphasis on physiologic foundations while not neglecting physics or pharmacology.

Apart from an overwordy chapter on automatic lung ventilators, and a disappointing chapter on blood transfusions, probably reflecting a relatively less aggressive British approach to this important area, the book is well produced, with clear illustrations, good indexing, and few printer's errors. The appendix provides a particularly timely section on math, computers, and statistics that many anesthesiologists—trained and untrained—will find useful in helping bridge the gap between college and recent publications. This book should "assist in understanding" and could prove to be the most used item in many a private collection.

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Tracheal Intubation. By E. L. APPLEBAUM AND D. L. BRUCE. Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders, 1976. Pages: 97. Price: \$9.50.

The authors' stated goal is to provide a text easily understood by variably trained and skilled police, firefighters, ambulance drivers, and other rescue workers. I am happy to tell you that they have produced a book easily understood and decidedly useful to anyone with a medical education.

It begins with an account of first aid to the person who has acute respiratory obstruction, evidently written before the introduction of the Heimlich maneuver; it also makes no mention of emergency cricothyroid puncture with a cannula or needle. The chapter on anatomy of the respiratory passage is conventional, illustrated by conventionally imaginative drawings; reality can be consulted later in the book, where three striking xeroradiographs of the upper air passages are reproduced. Regrettably, however, the text does not explain how the laryngeal machine operates when it obstructs the airway.

The sections on techniques and complications

of tracheal intubation and tracheostomy, illustrated with excellent step-by-step photographs and drawings, are unexceptionable and are clearly directed to others than the motley of rescue workers addressed in the introduction. Attractive, inexpensive, useful. What more can one ask?—B.R.F.

Electrocardiography for the Anesthetist. Third edition. By W. N. ROLLASON. Oxford, England, Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1975. Pages: 182. Price: \$10.25.

Dr. Rollason states that "there are a number of standard works on electrocardiography. . . ." He further states that the volume being reviewed here is not "intended to supplant any of the existing works on the subject." Be assured there is no great danger.

Economy seems to be the watchword for this small paperback volume. It is printed with easily read type on paper of reasonable quality. The illustrations, almost all line drawings, are quite clear but frequently arranged inconveniently. Typographical errors are few and not too distracting. Economy of content is both a strength and a weakness of this publication. Strength lies in the tight compression of thought into a few carefully selected words with adequate numbers of references to more elaborate statement and development of ideas. Unfortunately, the references are aging, omitting much important information acquired during the past six to eight years (such as His bundle studies, bi- and trifascicular blocks). Also unfortunately, most of the referenced material is published in Great Britain and may not be readily available to American practitioners.

One might easily mistake this book for a simple cataloguing of items and events, and hence put it aside after a brief scanning. This is especially true of the first three chapters, which deal with the nature of the normal and abnormal electrocardiogram.

The reader may become discouraged on reading at the end of Chapter 3 that "it would be inappropriate to discuss the management of dysrhythmias." If one does press on, there is some useful information in Chapters 4 and 5, dealing with physical and pharmacologic influences on the electrocardiogram during anesthesia and surgery. The subsequent chapters catalog the potential uses of the electrocardiogram in intensive care, anesthesia research and dental anesthesia. Finally, there is an appendix containing a nice explanation of the physics of recording an electrocardiogram. This may be the most valuable part of the book.

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