Book Reviews

Techniques of Anaesthesia. By J. A. THORNTON

This book is "aimed at guidance on practical day
to day anaesthesia with less emphasis on
background therapy." True to their purpose,
the authors have written an eminently practical book.
Its 16 chapters, which cover every major aspect of
surgical and obstetrical anesthesia, and respiratory
intensive care, contain a wealth of practical advice,
sound, direct and detailed as can be provided only
a good teacher with a long and varied clinical
experience. Herein lies the strength of the book.

The description of anesthetic techniques and apparatus
is integrated with a modicum of
background physiology and pharmacology. Here,
unfortunately, the authors have not been as felicitous,
for their style tends to be unclear. The reader
is likely to be confused by statements such as
"Neuromuscular blocking agents will not only
facilitate controlled respiration but also prevent
shivering; however, the altered response to these
agents of reduction of body temperature should be
borne in mind. d-Tubocurarine decreases in
sensitivity with reduction in temperature whereas
suxamethonium has the opposite effect."

The material is well presented, but has not been
sufficiently carefully proofread. A fair number of
typographical errors are to be found throughout the
book; only four of them have been emended on an
erratum sheet. The book ends with useful examples of
consent forms, a table of normal values, and
an adequate index. In spite of some drawbacks, it
will be helpful to the experienced practitioner
faced with an unfamiliar problem. It also can be
read with profit by the beginner, provided he
keeps a standard textbook alongside for consultation.

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The author intends this paperback to provide
midwives with sufficient understanding and facts
for the management of pain in labor, but it really
constitutes only an introduction to the subject. In
places it is already out-of-date; for example, the
section on narcotic antagonists makes no reference
to naloxone. Although the preface leads one to
expect "considerable detail on the subjects of
resuscitation and general anesthesia," references to
these topics are sparse indeed. There is nothing on
the management of the newborn, especially the
newborn requiring resuscitation.

The section on regional analgesia contains far too
little physiology and pathophysiology, considering
that "topping-up" of extradural analgesia is permitted
to midwives in the United Kingdom, and
paracervical and pudendal block is performed by
midwives in this country. The style is pleasantly
easy, but references are almost nonexistent. This
introduction to analgesia for midwives is therefore
at best a bare-bones review for those who have had
more intense training.

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Essentials of Anesthetic Practice. By S. C. CULLEN
AND C. P. LARSON, JR. Chicago, Year Book
$16.95.

Every author of a textbook wishes to present the
maximum amount of information in the fewest
possible pages. Doctors Cullen and Larson intend
their book as a manual for the student or neophyte
physician studying anesthesia, for the non-
physician anesthetists, and for the general prac-
titioners who sometimes administer anesthetics.

For this audience, the goals have been met very
reasonably. Particularity impressive is the repeated
emphasis on tailoring the anesthetic to the specific
needs of the individual patient. Sufficient funda-
mentals are presented to provide the basis for
individualization of anesthetic care. On the other
hand, considerable space is devoted to the techni-
cal details of anesthesia, even down to a detailed
discussion of venipuncture. The print is large and
crisp, typographical errors seem nonexistent, and
the many figures and graphs are simple yet illustra-
tive. The maximum dosage of local anesthetics,
however, is given as an absolute number, rather
than in milligrams per kilo of body weight. Such
minor criticisms notwithstanding, this book should
be very useful to those for whom it is intended.

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Books Received

(Note: Many of these books will be reviewed in subsequent issues of ANESTHESIOLOGY. Readers are
invited to bring interesting new titles to the Review Editor’s attention.—B. R. Fink)

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