BOOK REVIEW


This book, designed to cover comprehensively the study of modern anaesthetic practice and as a text for reference to its many aspects, has wisely been produced in two volumes. That they total well-nigh one thousand pages is the clearest indication that the field of anaesthesia is expanding to increasingly spacious horizons. It might well be thought that to read this book was a formidable task but such is far from the case—a happy circumstance perhaps due to the varied styles of its many famous authors. It is no exaggeration to say that the editors have so arranged the material that the subjects follow one another like the chapters of a good story-book. This is especially true of the first volume which deals with Basic Principles—not usually conducive to easy reading. The second volume is devoted to Techniques, Special Fields and Hazards and here, of course, it has been less easy to maintain a sense of continuity. The idea of the book as a text for reference is more prominent in this second part.

In the first volume, specialized aspects of basic subjects are treated by acknowledged authorities. In addition to chapters on anatomy and special physiology, there are original contributions on such topics as premedication, intravenous anaesthesia and blood transfusion. The Signs of Anaesthesia are given a new slant and even if the author of this chapter insists on death as the endpoint of anaesthesia, it is refreshing to be conducted downwards through some new country from which a happy ascent to recovery can be anticipated. There is the novelty of a chapter on the neurophysiology of anaesthesia and the prediction that this could be "quite a chapter" proved to be indeed true. It could not be expected that every chapter would be of equal strength though the standard is exceedingly high. Nevertheless the excellent chapter on Basal Narcosis by means of Rectal Injection might well be fitted in with the Principles of Premedication.

The second volume contains an abundance of information on the many techniques of anaesthesia in their application to all branches of surgery. The authors, each of whom again is universally accepted as a master of his subject, deal thoroughly with the many modern practices of anaesthesia, and they indicate clearly where this specialty has spread its benefits and specialized knowledge into wider medical fields. Particularly