Book Reviews

Atlas of Procedures in Anesthesia and Critical Care

John F. Butterworth. 1992. pp. 239. \$38.50 U.S.
ISBN 721629164

The 239 page "atlas" reviews procedures dealing with airway management, intravascular cannulation, regional anaesthesia and positioning of the patient. It utilizes illustrations that accompany succinct descriptions of a variety of procedures. The procedures are followed by references which enable the reader to seek a more in-depth review if desired.

There is no uniformity in the level of reader expertise assumed by the author. Some subspecialty topics are covered in immense detail while other more basic topics are given a general or even superficial approach. In Section I, airway management, the topic dealing with double lumen tubes was well done and resident-oriented. The remainder I found either too general or intended for those not intimately acquainted with airway techniques. Section II, intravascular techniques, the topic of intravascular electrocardiography was both practical and informative. However, anaesthesia residents and practicing anaesthetists would be familiar with the other procedures at an early stage. The third section, which reviews regional anaesthesia, covers upper and lower extremity blocks in addition to central axis techniques. This section is appropriate for a resident and offers a quick review for the occasional performer of regional anaesthesia. Unlike previous sections, more ancillary information accompanies the block techniques, i.e., the importance of baricity or the use of electrical nerve stimulation. I did not find the section on positioning to be worthwhile. The content was self-evident and I found its purpose in this atlas of procedures obscure.

Individuals seeking a quick procedural reference or refresher will find aspects of this atlas pertinent.

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Harold Griffith. The Evolution of Modern Anaesthesia. (Canadian Medical Lives; no. 8. Series Editor: T.P. Morley).

Richard Bodman and Deidre Gillies. Hannah Institute and Dundurn Press, Toronto and Oxford, 1992.
pp 128. \$17.95 (cloth). ISBN 1-55002-155-9

This is the eighth in the series on Canadian Medical Lives of the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine. Dr. Harold Randall Griffith (1894–1985) belonged to a Montréal medical family and his career centred on the Montréal Homoeopathic Hospital (now the Queen Elizabeth Hospital) where he succeeded his father as Medical Superintendent. His international reputation stemmed from the use of curare at that hospital 50 years ago; indisputably an essential stimulus to the growth of modern anaesthesia. However, Professor Bodman and Dr. Gillies introduce us to many other facets of this gentle and caring doctor, who became a leader in his specialty.

The authors have drawn on their personal knowledge of Dr. Griffith, archival sources of the Wood Library Museum and International Anesthesia Research Society and the recollections of his family and friends. Contributions from Dr. Enid MacLeod (Johnson) who co-authored the first "curare" article, Mrs. Mabel Pasquet (MacMillan), the nurse in charge of the first Recovery Room in Canada, his widow Mrs. Linda Griffith, their daughters Mrs. Linda Mary Jacobson and Mrs. Barbara Jean Clark and colleagues Drs. Ron Stephen, Philip Bromage and T.H. Seldon enliven this story. Perhaps the most interesting reading is that provided by Dr. Griffith himself: quotations from his collected publications "The Boundless Realm of Anaesthesiology," a diary of his student days and letters to his mother during army service.

The text includes quotes which give food for thought to today's practitioners. In the 1930's endotracheal intubation was favoured by only a few pioneers such as Arthur Guedel, Ivan Magill and Ralph Waters. Nevertheless, by 1931 Dr. Griffith could draw on his experience of 1,500 intubations: "However valuable endotracheal intubation is in head cases, it is its use in abdominal surgery which I wish to emphasize" Attitudes such as this let him achieve many of his lifetime goals and allowed him to reflect in his retirement: "The world of anaesthesiology is rapidly expanding, and it is not too much to hope that within a few years really good, safe

and pleasant anaesthesia may be available to all people everywhere." He was also pivotal in changing the political directions of anaesthesia as well as clinical practice, teaching and research. He advised in the landmark court action which ended the legal use of nurse anaesthetists in Quebec in 1939 and his successful claim for tax relief on travel expenses for postgraduate study in 1951 led to acceptance of benefits for doctors to attend two meetings each year.

For those associated with McGill Anesthesia, this biography of the Department's second Chairman will be exciting reading. It appears in the 50th anniversary year of the introduction of curare into anaesthetic practice and follows recognition by Canada Post with a commemorative stamp issue last year. Dr. Griffith's legacy will soon be reinforced by an endowed Chair of Anesthesia in his University Department. All are fitting tributes to this important Canadian, and the readers of this book will enjoy such insight into the person.

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Key Topics in Anaesthesia

T.M. Craft and P.M. Upton. Bios Scientific Publishers Ltd., 1992, 298 + xiv pp, Price: \$29.90 (US)/£14.95 (UK)

The authors of this inexpensive paperback, recognizing that the recurrent nature of common clinical problems obliges examiners to establish candidates' competence by posing relevant questions repetitiously, scrutinized recent fellowship examination papers to determine the commonest. One hundred of these subjects are presented in a uniform style with two source references and cross referrals, the object being to develop problem-based learning skills and presumably examination success.

How well do they succeed?

The reviews are less complete than conscientious trainees could provide for themselves using simple card index and box file systems. The choice of alphabetic, rather than systematic, format deflects from the development of logical thought. There are occasional typographic errors, viz, page 11 Moffett's method, page 198 Charles' law, page 198 Hagen Pousseuille. The dose of adrenalin recommended for anaphylactic shock is too low by North American standards. There is no mention of warm cardioplegia, SvO_2 monitoring and aprotinin in coagulation management in cardiopulmonary bypass. Day surgery is poorly described. The review articles quoted, although usually recent, are rarely definitive and doomed as is 50% of medical knowledge to rapid obso-

lescence. If this is accepted, then the dubious value of "Key Topics in Anaesthesia" will depend upon the frequency with which it is revised.

If one accepts the scotomatous view that passing a fellowship examination is an end in itself, then this book is for those whose study habits lack formality. Today, however, a medical qualification is merely a licence to pursue a lifetime of study which should be disciplined.

I would neither buy this book nor recommend it, except perhaps to examiners who might use it to reformulate their question banks.

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