BOOK REVIEWS

LOCAL ANALGESIA: BRACHIAL PLEXUS. By R. R. MACINTOSH (Nuffield Professor of Anaesthetics, University of Oxford) and WILLIAM W. MUSHIN (Professor of Anaesthetics, Welsh National School of Medicine, University of Wales). Third ed., Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. [Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. 1954. Pp. 62, 43 illus. \$1.80.

The third edition of this excellent book, published in 1954, is now available. There are very few changes over the previous second edition of 1947. The section on local anaesthetic solutions recommends the use of Xylocaine as a local anaesthetic agent, and also of Hyaluronidase in anaesthetic solutions. The section on the Stellate Ganglion has been enlarged slightly and is a little more descriptive. The section on Complications has included, briefly, the treatment of pneumothorax.

This concise, excellently illustrated treatise on Brachial Plexus Block Anesthesia should be seen on the shelf of every anaesthesiologist or medical practitioner who is practising anaesthesia. It is one of the best books available in medical literature today.

H. B. GRAVES

BASIC SCIENCES IN ANESTHESIOLOGY: A GUIDE FOR STUDY. By ARTHUR B. TARROW (Lt. Col., United States Air Force (Medical Corps)). 2nd ed., San Antonio, Texas: Lydette Publishing Company. \$5 00.

This volume covers the subjects of Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Physics and Chemistry, and Pharmacology. The material is arranged in question and answer form, and each answer is referred to a standard text-book source. The questions are in the "true or false" form current with the examinations of the American Board of Anesthesiology, and although this reviewer has, personally, no use for this type of question, it is undoubtedly true that Col. Tarrow's volume will be of great value as a guide to those reviewing their knowledge of the basic sciences for the Board examinations.

R. A. GORDON

LOCAL ANALGESIA. ABDOMINAL SURGERY. By R. R. MACINTOSH and R. BRYCE-SMITH. Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. [Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. \$1.80.

The widespread use of curare and other relaxants has greatly reduced the indications for regional anaesthetic techniques in abdominal surgery. However, these procedures are still of value, particularly for those cases in which the hazards of anaesthesia may be increased by the use of a relaxing agent, e.g. bowel obstruction or strangulated hernia.

In this small volume—and its size is one of the best features, since it is much more likely to be read thoroughly than if it were a large tome—the authors have presented, clearly and concisely, the nerve block techniques which may be used

for abdominal surgery of all types. Some are well-known techniques, others are new in their approach.

One refreshing feature of the book, also found in others from the same centre, deserves special mention. The authors obviously assume that their work will be read by those of at least average intelligence. The book is readable and the "instruction by numbers" presentation so often found in books on regional anaesthesia is carefully avoided.

Each section of the text is fully illustrated with diagrams and drawings which by their clarity and by proper positioning in relation to the text illustrated, enhance greatly the usefulness of the book.

I. M. MACKAY

ELEMENTS OF PEDIATRIC ANESTHESIA. By C. R. STEPHEN, B.Sc., M.D.C.M., D.A. Toronto: Ryerson Press. \$4 00.

The need for an up-to-date book dealing with recently developed drugs and current techniques used in paediatric anaesthesia is generally recognized. The monograph under review unfortunately fails to fill this gap in our literature. Dr. Wesley Bourne in his foreword states "In his [the author's] diction nothing is oblique and one finds relevancy everywhere." Unfortunately we cannot share this opinion.

The first third of the book is devoted to a description of the physiological peculiarities of smaller children as they relate to anaesthesia. The basic principles outlined in this section are sound, holding true for any age group or anaesthetic technique, although some of them are relatively more important in paediatric work. Some of the details here are rather puzzling, however, for example the recommendation that $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{5}$ isotonic saline be administered by vein.

The chapter on anaesthesia in premature infants might well have been expanded beyond the single page devoted to this difficult group.

The chapter entitled the "Thymic Child" is confusing, in that while the thymus gland is exonerated as a cause of sudden death a "thymic" syndrome is described. Surely this ghost was laid years ago.

The succeeding chapters deal in turn with premedication, basal anaesthesia, techniques, clinical pharmacology of anaesthetic drugs, and choice of anaesthesia for various specific operations. The book concludes with a description of oxygen therapy techniques and the treatment of asphyxia neonatorum. The criticism of these chapters is that an attempt has been made to cover far too much in far too little space, with the result that nothing is really covered adequately. An example is the section entitled "Curariform Drugs" in which only curare itself is mentioned to the complete exclusion of all curariform agents as well as the depolarizing relaxants now in widespread use.

The conception of the section on the physiology of infants as related to anaesthesia has much merit. We would like to see this portion expanded into a full monograph which would be a worth-while contribution to the literature. It is unfortunate that with all of the knowledge at his disposal and his broad experience in the paediatric field the author has not produced a better book.

CODE SMITH