

Principles and Practice of Obstetric Anaesthesia. Second edition. J. SELWYN CRAWFORD, M.B., Ch.B., F.F.A.R.C.S., D.A. Oxford. Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1965. Pp. xviii+355. Price 60s.

I was very surprised on receiving this book by the great increase in size and price over the first edition. It must be over four years since I read it with great enjoyment, and I had the impression that it was a concise little monograph. Now it appears that it has moved up to the position of a reference book, and so I read it with interest to see if such an increase in size was necessary. I found that the change was fully justified. The volume has been almost completely re-written and contains all the physiology and pharmacology necessary to understand the obstetric problems and the modern anaesthetic technique described. Of particular interest to the part-time anaesthetist like myself is the standardized routine for dealing with elective caesarian section which can also be modified and used for many other obstetric problems. The reassessment of the place of regional anaesthesia is also very helpful, particularly in view of the change of outlook on this subject since publication of the first edition. Also of interest is the description of the newer techniques of pudendal and paracervical blocks.

To sum up, this book is really a must for any practitioner who is likely to be confronted with obstetric anaesthesia, my only regret being that its change of status will probably necessitate the future publication of more frequent editions.

Clinical Diagnosis in Labour. Second edition. R. H. J. HAMLIN, O.B.E., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.O.G. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1965. Pp. xii + 178. Price 20s.

The author of this little book is a well-known obstetrician who qualified in New Zealand in 1941 and has had extensive experience of obstetrics, mainly in Australia but also in Hong Kong, Ethiopia and Britain. In this book he emphasizes the importance of careful and thorough clinical assessment during the first and second stages of labour. He gives many examples of tragedies that have resulted from its omission and describes in detail how to recognize the minor abnormalities which are so easily missed. He advocates more use of rectal examination, which can be carried out frequently with no risk of contamination, and he describes a little-known recto-abdominal method of rotating a persistent occipito-posterior presentation which succeeds in two-thirds of the cases in which standard vaginal rotation would otherwise be necessary.

The book is well presented, the print is clear and the many illustrations lucid and informative. Some readers may be irritated by the use, on almost every page, of heavy type to emphasize one or two words, many of little importance such as "when accurately diagnosed" and "in the same hospital" which serves only to distract attention from more important material.