BOOK REVIEWS

A SHORT PRACTICE OF SURGERY

By HAMILTON BAILEY, F.R.C.S., and R. J. McNEILL LOVE, F.R.C.S. 6th Edition. Pp. 1034, illustrations 922 (many coloured). H. K. Lewis & Co., London. 1943. Price 36s.

The fact that this textbook has been issued ten times, six editions and four reprintings, in under eleven years is the best evidence of its popularity. It is perhaps a commentary on the selection of teaching staffs that neither of the authors is on the staff of a teaching hospital.

This book contains an enormous amount of information, much of which is not available in works of many volumes, and yet it is not a synopsis but is a readable book. There is almost a picture to every page, and this makes it easy to assimilate the facts. The use of small print for the more rare conditions enables a proper balance to be maintained.

Individual differences of opinion are bound to occur, and though the reviewer has little use for the expectant treatment of appendicitis and has seen, in actual practice, illness considerably prolonged by this method, it must be admitted that the details of this treatment are admirably set out.

One of the dangers of new editions at short intervals by authors whose time must be very occupied is the danger of slurring over revision and reluctance to re-arrange. The only evidence of this is the absence of a chapter on shock. That part of the book dealing with haemorrhage, shock and burns should be re-arranged and resuscitation dealt with a little more fully, especially as many of the readers of this book are, or will shortly be, in the Forces. Oxygen therapy could be transferred to this part and a little more detail given to help junior residents in regard to flowmeters and rate of flow. Surely the use of a French's needle and the collection of blood by gravity in an open flask is obsolete. A short paragraph in small print on the crush syndrome would not be out of place. In dealing with burns the directions given for the use of a Bunyan bag are not those usually employed, and before the next edition, which at the present rate will be required in a few months, the editors would do well to see the coloured film on this subject produced at the Middlesex Hospital.

The details of Murphy's principle of proctoclysis are well worth studying as set out and illustrated, for the methods of Lane have tended to obscure these principles.

It might be worth giving a little more detail of the treatment of varicose veins as the average reader of this book is more likely to undertake this treatment than to perform embolectomy that is so well described and beautifully illustrated. I would suggest that the empty vein technique should be described as well as the subcutaneous ligature in its simple form.

The chapter on infections of the hand is perhaps too brief, but is a welcome sign of the importance of this subject which was so neglected in teaching schools in the past that much of the casualty work of the voluntary hospitals was deplorable.

As a final trivial criticism, surely the term grog-

blossom is commoner and more picturesque than potato nose.

If I have appeared too critical in this review it may be an attempt to reach perfection when this is so nearly achieved, but perhaps I am gilding the lily. At any rate, I can truly say that if I could only take one book of surgery with me on an expedition, or on service, I should most certainly take Bailey and Love's *Short Practice of Surgery*.

ESSENTIALS OF GENERAL ANAESTHESIA

By R. R. MACINTOSH and FRED A. BANNISTER. 3rd Edition. Blackwell, Oxford. 1943. Price 25s.

One's feeling about this book is that it is a pity it has not been expanded into a textbook covering the whole subject of anaesthesia, but, as the authors state in their preface to the present edition, they considered this only to discard it because of the reception the book has had in its present form. Such a statement speaks for itself, and therefore there is little that the reviewer can say except to recommend it wholeheartedly to those who are engaged in the practice of, or who are about to take an interest in, the art of anaesthesia.

The general approach to the subject differs widely from the usual textbook, and has much to commend it. Following the history of anaesthesia, the theory and physiology is well discussed—already the beginner feels that he understands much that was vague to him. The signs of anaesthesia are then dealt with in a masterly fashion, and one soon realises the significance of cyanosis with the aid of some delightful coloured diagrams. In the past routine premedication has gained much ill-repute, although the reason was not often understood. The diagram showing the effect of the metabolic rate (note: not basal) on the stages of anaesthesia gives one the correct outlook on premedication. It also answers the question why, in the hands of the inexperienced, the intravenous anaesthetics are so variable in their action.

The chapter on the difficult patient is most useful and should be read by all. There is also an interesting chapter on that useful drug which has caused so much trouble to the uninitiated—ethyl chloride. The two methods of its administration to children should be much more widely known.

In like manner the administration of vinesthene, chloroform, ether, the barbiturates, nitrous oxide and cyclopropane is discussed—each chapter with its veritable score of sagacious hints.

Respiratory obstruction—that nightmare of the beginner is discussed in the fullest detail, helped, by many excellent diagrams and radiographs. How few of us realise the true action of the vocal cords in respiration, or of the significance of the usage of the accessory muscles of respiration.

Only these few examples are chosen out of the text so full of the most interesting and helpful essentials. It is knowledge of the essentials of any trade which makes one proficient, not detail of the more complex side-lines.

We heartily wish this edition all the success of the previous two, a success which they so richly deserved. Congratulations are due to Blackwell's for producing such an excellent book under war-time conditions.