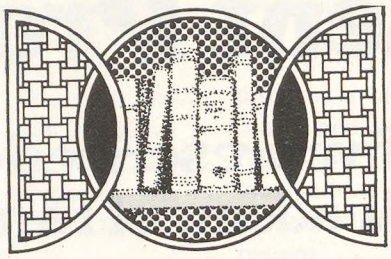
# Book Reviews



**Scientific Quotations: The Harvest of a Quiet Eye.** *Selected by Alan Mackay; Maurice Ebison (ed). Crane, Russak, and Company, New York, 1977, 167 pp., $14.00.*

Alan Mackay is a crystallographer at the University of London. Trained in the physical sciences, he also received a classical education in his native England. It was a classics master who, in 1940, required him and his fellow students to keep a notebook record of quotations from their daily reading. This established a habit which persists and has provided us with this delightful selection. The title is somewhat misleading. Rather than "Scientific Quotations," the volume contains a very broad selection of phrases and ideas articulated by poets, philosophers, theologians, and politicians, as well as those penned by the supporters and detractors of science. Pertinent graffiti noted in public places receive equal billing with Galileo and Darwin.

This book will certainly appeal to those who are fond of spicing their own lectures and writings with quotes from the past. The index is well done, enabling the reader to track down from key words, phrases incompletely remembered. I enjoyed roaming through the pages discovering intriguing ideas recorded by thinkers and doers previously unknown to me. I could only wish for more biographical data with the names I do not recognize. But, that concession to my laziness would certainly increase the reasonable cost and weight of the book.

Finally, a sobering thought for those of us who enjoy such books, Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as follows: "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."

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**Modern Practical Neurology.** *Peritz Scheinberg. Raven Press, New York, 1977, 247 pp., $9.95 (paper).*

The author of this small volume states that it is intended to provide "a brief, practical . . . review of the principles of diagnosis and management of some important neurologic disorders . . . [which] is not intended to be encyclopedic . . . and deals with common problems rather than esoterica." In this it succeeds admirably. Of especial value are the sections dealing with common presenting complaints such as headache, dizziness, and low back syndromes. The differential diagnosis and work-up of patients with these complaints is presented in a thorough, yet very practical way. The neurological examination is approached in a common-sense way that will be especially useful to those who have been led to believe that any neuro-

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logical evaluation requires at least two hours of intensive examination.

Perhaps a bit more attention is devoted to description of involuntary movement disorders and neuromuscular disorders than is justified by their frequency, but this is more than compensated for by excellent passages such as the chapter on management of the unconscious patient and evaluation of head injury. On the whole, the book well merits the attention of all family physicians.

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**Current Therapy 1978.** *Howard F. Conn (ed). W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1978, 947 pp., $25.50, $28.50 (Canada).*

This book belongs in the library, and preferably on the desk, of all primary care physicians. It should be particularly useful to family physicians and family practice residents. The information from the 339 contributors is clearly, concisely, and carefully expressed and amazingly uniform from chapter to chapter. There are few illustrations, but the multiple tables are quite useful. As an immediate source, quickly read, this book is excellent for the subjects presented.

Most commonly confronted problems are discussed, but the reader must recognize that some chapters are more applicable to colleagues practicing elsewhere in the world. On the other hand, these chapters are appropriate for North American physicians when one considers the extensive world travel by our patients and, also, remembers that this book is distributed worldwide.

One defect in this book is there by design; with no references, the reader is actually consulting one physician. This is advantageous to most of us when faced with a need for quick information. However, this demands knowledge and experience from the reader. Thus, the neophyte physician will appreciate this book but should seek additional opinions in the establishment of his therapeutic information base. Physicians not practicing a primary care specialty will also find this text useful when dealing with a patient problem outside of their area of expertise.

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**Fracture Management: A Practical Approach.** *J. Ted Hartman. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1978, 338 pp., $21.50.*

This book was designed and executed as a handbook to aid in the diagnosis and management of fractures and dislocations. It includes some general principles, such as the management of patients with injuries and a specific section on fractures in children. The book then goes through body systems in an anatomic approach to fractures and dislocations. The book is profusely illustrated and the illustrations are pertinent to the text. The organization of the text allows for easy reference.

Considerable emphasis is given to the closed management of frac-

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tures. Since this will be the most common area of inquiry that might concern physicians in family practice, the book is a valuable addition to the working library of a practicing family physician. It also should be of interest and value to medical students. Suitable reference material is appended to each chapter to allow for further reading should this be required. Much of the reference material includes standard texts which should be available in any medical library.

To anyone who treats acute fractures and dislocations, or who sees trauma, this book will provide a valuable working library text for ready reference. It may well be the initial review required of students beginning work in the trauma area, where many times the desire is to learn the ideal way of treating specific fractures including recommended periods of immobilization and approaches to follow-up care. For this use, the book is a valuable addition to the readable library of a practicing physician.

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**Death and Dying.** *Richard G. Benton. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1978, 345 pp., $12.95.*

Dr. Richard G. Benton, a Texas psychologist, has presented us with an addition to what has been a growing literature on death and dying. His book, *Death and Dying*, is presented as he states in the preface "as a core text for the undergraduate nursing curriculum course called 'Death and Dying' or as a supplementary text to other nursing courses and community and public health education." The book contains eight chapters dealing with a range of subjects from philosophical considerations of termination of life to more mundane material such as facsimiles of death certificates, "Living Bank" forms, and a check list of religious rites. Other chapters deal with a range of issues, such as euthanasia, grieving, funerals and death rituals, and nursing intervention for the dying and bereaved. One chapter presents a number of transcripts of interviews attempting to make more personal some issues on the subject. It is unfortunate that transcripts of interviews generally fail to convey the immediacy and emotional impact of a live interview. The bibliography at the end of each chapter represents a scholarly attempt to cover a range of subjects too large for one book.

The book may well prove worthwhile as a springboard for discussion in the setting in which the author proposed it. However, in the attempt to be comprehensive, some sections become too superficial. The subject itself has, of course, vaulted into prominence primarily due to the work of Dr. Kübler-Ross. One might suspect, however, that we may have reached the zenith in enthusiasm on the subject since the essential aspect of the process of death does not lend itself to definitive modification. One might expect, therefore, that eventually those who have become involved in this area will move on to other avenues of interest.

This book, like others in the behavioral sciences which deal with soft data, may well serve to

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facilitate the communication process between "helping persons." It is the hope, of course, that such a process will result in alteration in the manner in which such persons conduct themselves with patients and families. Whether increasing intellectual grasp does, in fact, increase the capacity for genuine relatedness in the human struggle of life and death remains open to question.

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**Neurology for the House Officer, (2nd Edition).** *Howard L. Weiner and Lawrence P. Levitt. Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1978, 180 pp., $9.95 (paper).*

Thirty years ago, when I finished neuroanatomy at the University of Wisconsin, my professor, Frederick Geist, MD, stated that I knew more neurology than I would at anytime in my life, unless I became a neurologist or a neurosurgeon. He was right, but I have reached the second plateau after reading *Neurology for the House Officer.* This is the type of small book that will be invaluable in the office for the physician doing family practice, in the Emergency Room for the ER physician, and for any physician who must inevitably make judgments on neurological problems. The book is small, easily read, well organized, and adequately illustrated.

The organization of the book consists of sections devoted to common neurological findings, such as right hemiplegia, left hemiplegia, coma, TIA, selected stroke syndromes, aphasia, headache, vertigo, seizures, hyper and hyporeflexia, myopathies, tremor, ataxia, and peripheral nerve and root dysfunction. There are sections specifically on the neurology of diabetes, alcohol, and uremia. The book contains specific discussions of raised intracranial pressure, head trauma, and a section that is very understandable on neuroanatomy with an excellent section on eye deviation and eye signs.

Certain key points in the book are emphasized typographically. The specific treatment of emergencies and problems are given in specific dose tables, including the treatment of Parkinsonism and the use of steroids and mannitol for increased intracranial pressure. The do's and don'ts of spinal taps are well outlined. The importance of CAT scanning is emphasized.

My only criticism is that some of the neurological reflexes are described and defined and others only mentioned by name; but unfamiliar ones can easily be reviewed.

In summary, this is one of the best 180-page books that I have ever read and it will make an excellent addition to almost any physician's library. I will refer to it frequently.

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**Practical Endocrine Diagnosis (2nd Edition).** *Nelson B. Watts, Joseph H. Keffer. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1978, 123 pp., $9.75 (paper).*

The editors state the purpose of this book is to present up-to-date methods for diagnosis of endocrine diseases with emphasis on hormone measurement. The reader

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should be able to extract the material pertinent to his patient or the problem at hand with a minimum of distraction. This manual was developed as a result of interaction between the physician in charge of the laboratory and the physician involved in patient care. It emphasizes the dynamics of a given hormone system.

The editors made no attempt to be complete in the subjects treated and the non-hormonal aspects of the diseases are not stressed.

There are 11 chapters, including Basic Concepts, The Hypothalamus and the Anterior Pituitary, The Adrenal Cortex and Glucocorticoids, Renin-Angiotensin System, Aldosterone, Pheochromocytoma, The Thyroid Gland, The Parathyroid Glands, Reproductive Endocrinology, Insulin and Glucose Homeostasis, and an Appendix.

There are numerous line drawing schema of hormone interrelationships and actions which I found somewhat lacking in clarity. More explanation under some of the illustrations would correct this minor deficiency.

This book is not a source for clinical descriptions of disease entities, their diagnosis or management, nor was it intended to be. What it is is a very handy reference to turn to when the physician asks himself, "How do I go about establishing the diagnosis of the endocrine problem in question?" There is an index page before each chapter on which the subjects to be discussed are summarized. The text is concise and precise, with few wasted words. A limited bibliography is presented after each chapter, usually references to the latest in the literature for the subjects discussed.

The authors have met their stated intentions very well. The book would be most useful to the practicing physician, including the family physician and the internist, who is himself managing endocrine problems.

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**Surgical Skills in Patient Care.** *Charles W. Van Way, III, Charles A. Buerk. C. V. Mosby, St. Louis, 1978, 200 pp., $10.95 (paper).*

In *Surgical Skills in Patient Care* the authors tackle 14 areas of concern, and these are all high-frequency procedural tasks common at the house officer level. Such tasks as aseptic technique, knot tying, local anesthesia, intravenous techniques, and intubations (eg, bladder, gastrointestinal sonogram, and endotracheal) are discussed in some detail. Illustrations are good and techniques are limited to those preferred by the authors, thereby avoiding the possible confusions of multiple approaches.

This paperback book is readable, well organized, and well illustrated. It would be most useful for the senior medical student or new house officer, and would seem to fill an obvious need in that area. To the experienced practicing physician and more advanced family practice resident, it would have less to offer.

This reviewer was most impressed with the section on sutures, needles, knot tying, and care of the wound, and the section on intravenous and arterial techniques. This book will be useful as an initial learning tool, but not particularly useful as a reference text.

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