

Book Review.

A Text-Book of Obstetrics. By BARTON COOKE HIRST, M.D.,
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W. B. Saunders, Publisher, Philadelphia.

Though there are many excellent works on obstetrics, and many of them new, there is still room for another, especially when it is written by one qualified by years of constant practice of his special line, as an attendant at the large hospitals, as a teacher in the clinics and as a lecturer and professor in the university, and as a consultant with a wide range of experience. In "*A Text-Book of Obstetrics*" the author has been able to find new and practical methods of writing, describing, and illustrating, which are both pleasing and eminently instructive. By omitting much of the padding so common in text-books, he has conferred benefits upon his readers. The straightforward brevity of his diction commends itself both to the student who is working up the subject and to the practitioner who wishes to refresh his mind by a study of the most recent and accepted methods. Where all is so excellent it seems almost presumptuous to criticise, but there are some points upon which we do not agree.

Regarding anesthesia his preference is for ether, which he says is "an efficient, convenient, and satisfactory agent." I have found it so only in a comparative way, and can only think that those who use it in obstetrical practice miss very much, as chloroform is so much more convenient, efficient, safe and satisfactory. In preventing perineal rupture its rapid action enables one to control violent expulsive efforts better than other agents.

In the chapter on labor there are many valuable hints, and his remarks on episiotomy, cutting the cord, after-pains, involution of uterus, mammary evolution, rest and quiet, urination, catheterization, etc., are especially worthy of perusal.

In treating the various faulty presentations, all is made very clear, both by words and by illustrations. If I would offer any remark it would be that I do not think that stress enough is laid upon the value of complete anesthesia whilst the position is changed by the hand in the uterus.

In the treatment of puerperal sepsis we have a very thorough and comprehensive view, and the subject of serum-therapy is thoroughly dealt with. He makes it clear that "the anti-streptococcic serum has no antagonistic power over other micro-organisms, and that the results of the serum-therapy for puerperal infection have not been, as yet, at all encouraging." On the whole the author has reason to be proud of having presented to the profession a book which is eminently practical, true and scholarly, one to be treasured amongst the leading works of the day.