Vascular Birthmarks—Hemangiomas and Malformations. By JB Mulliken and AE Young. Pp 483: £98 hardback. W B Saunders, 1988. ISBN 0-7216-6601-9.

This book is a blend of England New and Old, being the result of collaboration between two surgeons from Harvard and St Thomas's respectively. In the chapters they have written themselves they have achieved a uniformity of text and style if rather too American for my taste. Chapters from other contributors are less successfully incorporated.

The book is divided into four. Of part one I particularly enjoyed the (largely irrelevant) chapters on birthmarks in folklore, history, art, and literature. Not many textbooks travel from Cicero to Gorbachev via James II of Scotland or the 'Tragedies of Cymbeline' (Shakespeare) to 'Blind Love' (Pritchett) via 'The Birthmark' (Hawthorn). Of real importance is the following chapter on classification which is the essential reading if full use is to be made of the book. The system proposed I found both logical and practical. For example, two axioms are quoted: 'Not all hemangiomas look like strawberries' with the corollary 'Not all strawberries are hemangiomas'.

Part two consists of three chapters on haemangiomas, part three has nine more on the much rarer vascular malformations. Separation into pathogenesis, clinical assessment, investigation, radiological assessment and the like, followed by separate chapters on capillary, venous and arterial, etc, make for a repetitive but comprehensive treatment of the subject.

Part four comprises eight more chapters dealing with the central nervous system and regions of the body—head and neck, upper limb, and so on. The final chapters deal with laser therapy, embolisation, and the emotional impact of a vascular birthmark on the family.

The book is well illustrated—in colour where appropriate. It deals with a difficult and wide ranging subject. The authors demonstrate an enthusiasm for and an encyclopaedic knowledge of the subject with an acute awareness of the need of patients and their parents.

The preface states this book is 'intended for a reference for both primary and secondary care physicians'. I think they include paediatricians among the former—I fear it fails, for it is necessary to read most of the book, to understand its layout, to know how and where to look up the problem. In places it is too detailed with an

excess of background information and theory. I suspect it is the sort of book that many departments might think they should have but would rarely use. I consider it interesting reading rather than a usable reference work and it is too expensive for most individuals to buy. I would add that a plastic surgeon with a particular interest in this field might consider this book his bible on the subject.

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Textbook of Paediatric Anaesthetic Practice. Edited by Edward Sumner and David Hatch. Pp 603: £37.50 hardback. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989. ISBN 0-7020-1336-6.

To paraphrase Thurber, you can please some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time, at least not very often! Hatch and Sumner's *Textbook of Paediatric Anaesthetic Practice* should please both the specialist paediatric anaesthetist and the general anaesthetist who deals with children.

The editors have commissioned chapters from 28 authors, mainly from North America, Australia, and Great Britain, to produce a comprehensive and authoritative textbook. Many of the chapters are written by experts in their field and include recent advances and a commendably up to date set of references. The text covers all aspects of paediatric anaesthesia from pre-operative assessment to postoperative management and includes chapters on paediatric liver transplantation, paediatric heart-lung transplantation, and paediatric anaesthesia in developing countries. It seems unfair to single out chapters in a book with such a high overall standard, but the chapters on unusual conditions in paediatric anaesthesia by Anne Lynn and on resuscitation in paediatrics by David Zideman, will be particularly useful to many anaesthetists.

As many children in Britain are managed on adult intensive care units, at least until transfer can be arranged to a specialist centre, I think guidance on the principles of paediatric intensive care and on dealing with the more common conditions in paediatric intensive care would be a valuable addition to this textbook, particularly as few of the adult intensive care texts

include chapters on paediatrics. The book deals with anaesthetic practice, however, and the editors may say intensive care was not in their remit.

In the preface the editors say the book is aimed at the general anaesthetist who deals with children, the anaesthetic trainee waiting for higher examinations, and the specialist paediatric anaesthetist. This is an ambitious aim that is fulfilled. The text is clear and readable with good illustrations and diagrams and very reasonably priced. There should be a copy in every department where children are anaesthetised. It is highly recommended.

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Maternal Fetal Medicine. Principles and Practice. Edited by R Creasy and R Resnik. Pp 1236: price not stated, hardback. W B Saunders, 1989. ISBN 0-7216-2304-2.

For those who like to have everything under one cover this could well be their choice for a specialist book in advanced postgraduate obstetrics. It is an extremely heavy book to carry and hopefully will not disappear easily from departments and libraries. Despite its size it is broken down into over 50 chapters, some subdivided so in no way is it an awesome book. It is essentially an American book with only a handful of the 50 contributors coming from Britain, Canada, and Australia.

Basic sciences are covered with over 100 pages on reproductive genetics and the typical sections relating to physiological and anatomical aspects of pregnancy. Many of the more recent developments in fetal medicine are covered in a 200 page section entitled 'Fetal diagnostic and treatment modalities'. The section has detailed updated chapters on, for example, ultrasound and Doppler. The fetal heart is considered not only in these two chapters but also in its own specific chapters relating to physiology, the fetal heart rate, and arrhythmias. The latest proposals relating to fetal therapy are discussed in relation to this and other organs.

The more conventional obstetric subjects—for example, prematurity—are in general covered in succinct but readable, well referenced chapters. One or two parts are written somewhat parochially both in their approach and in their references but in general I feel the book could easily fit into