

In conclusion, I found this book to be interesting, thought-provoking, highly relevant, and informative to contemporary anesthesiology while also being entertaining. In my experience, this combination is rare in medically oriented books.

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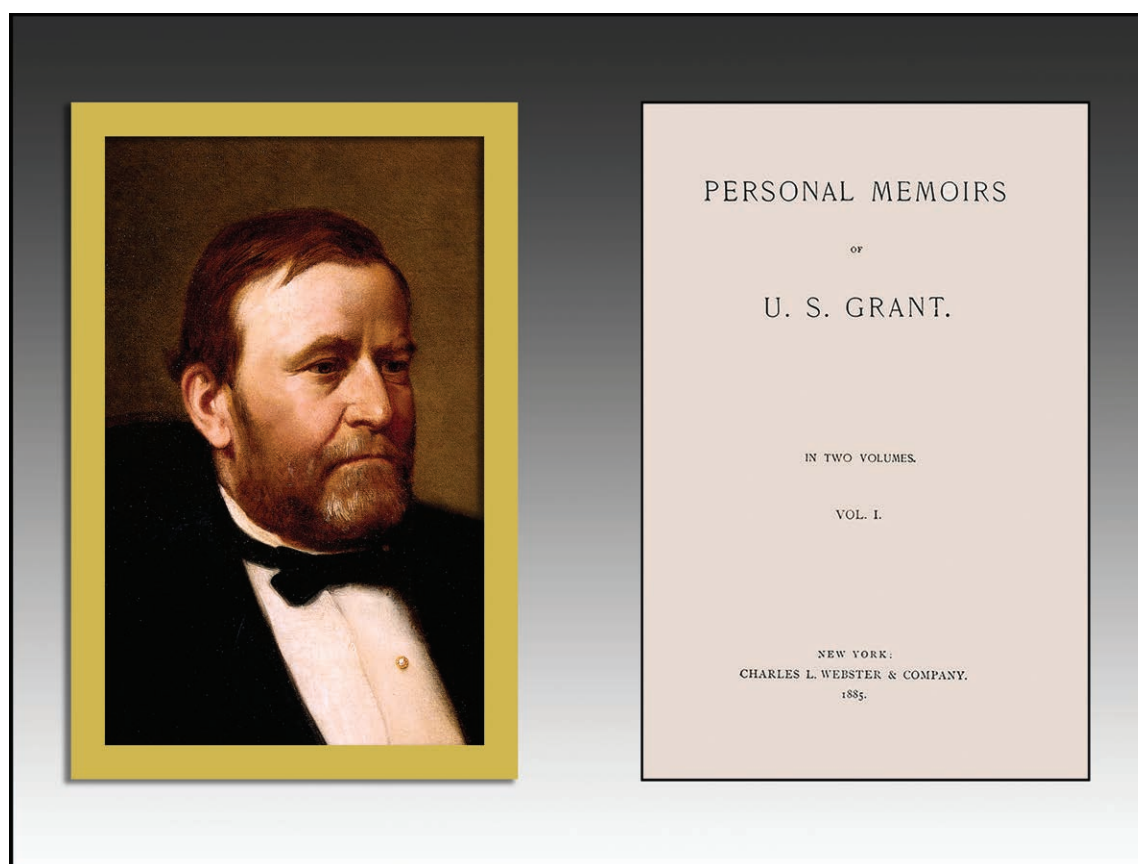
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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Terminal Memoirs of America's 18th President: Grant, Twain...and Cocaine



Seven years after serving as the eighteenth American president, General Ulysses Simpson Grant (1822 to 1885) lost his personal fortune to a swindler. However, the lump at the back of Grant's throat was not just sorrow; rather, a cancer had grown, presumably from his heavy abuse of tobacco and alcohol. Distraught at the prospect of leaving his family penniless, Grant took writer Mark Twain's suggestion to heart and began composing personal memoirs for publication. As the general's pain worsened, his physician began numbing Grant's throat with a local anesthetic, cocaine. Twain observed that "the last 2/3 of the second volume was dictated by the General, dying—passing slowly away in the pitiless agonies of cancer in the mouth; he revised his work with his pencil during the last three weeks of his life—after he had become entirely speechless. He made no braver fight in the field than he made on his deathbed." (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists' Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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