Theme-oriented chapters, such as "Antiseptics," are still biographical in nature but bring in a wider range of players. Thus, Pasteur and Lister are given center stage, with rather brief reference to Koch, Holmes (Oliver Wendell, not Sherlock), and Billroth. In a book striving for brevity, editorial choices must be made, but it is still surprising that no mention appears of the preeminent pathologist of the century, Rudolf Virchow (a compelling portrait of Virchow can be found in *Doctors: The Biography of Medicine* by Sherwin B. Nuland).

Williams is decidedly Anglocentric, and, wherever possible, he emphasizes the British contribution. Hence, in the 17-page chapter on "Anaesthetics" only four pages are devoted to the American discovery—the rest describes British figures such as Humphry Davy, James Simpson, and John Snow.

The strength of the book is Williams' ability to tell a good story—interesting childhood and domestic biographical details allow us to grasp historical figures as people in particular social and cultural contexts. Further, the liberal use of quotations from primary sources defines the characters and makes an already lively story even livelier. For example, the oral confession of an infamous bodysnatcher is directly quoted—we hear the chilling details of a murder committed to provide a young body for anatomic dissection.

The Age of Miracles is informative, entertaining, and—here's another miracle—it only costs 10 bucks.

Audrey Shafer, M.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Anesthesia
Stanford University School of Medicine
Staff Anesthesiologist
Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System
Palo Alto, California 94304
ashafer@stanford.edu

Textbook of Intravenous Anesthesia. Edited by P. F. White. Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins, 1997. Pages: 617. Price: $89.00.

This hardback first-edition textbook is sure to become the text against which all others on the subject of intravenous anesthesia are measured. The editor, Dr. Paul F. White, has brought together a truly international and expert group of contributing authors. Under Dr. White's editorial guidance, these 56 authorities have created a cohesive, comprehensive, timely, and definitive reference covering all aspects of intravenous anesthesia.

The 617 pages of this information-packed, but surprisingly easy-to-read, textbook are well organized into eight sections and 30 chapters. The first section contains an enlightening history of intravenous anesthesia along with well-written background chapters on pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic principles and mechanisms of intravenous anesthesia and analgesia. In sections II–IV, the major anesthesia-related intravenous drug groups are discussed in depth. There is a consistent organization to the chapters that comprise these sections. In general, each chapter describes the physicochemical characteristics, known or proposed mechanism(s) of action, pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and clinical use of the members of a chemically distinct class of drugs. Historically important and currently available drugs are covered, as are several drugs currently in development. Of particular note is the laudable chapter on propofol written by the editor. The fifth section is devoted to anesthetic techniques. It includes chapters on balanced anesthesia, total intravenous anesthesia (TIVA), and neurolept and dissociative anesthesia. These integrative chapters are outstanding and clinically relevant. Also in this section are useful chapters on intravenous adjuvants to anesthesia and drug interactions. Section VI covers intravenous anesthesia as it relates to pediatric, geriatric, ambulatory surgery, and critically ill patients. The three chapters that make up section VII, "Controversies in Intravenous Anesthesia," present slightly differing perspectives on issues related to drug delivery systems, monitoring of anesthetic depth, and control of the stress response. These are excellent and interesting chapters that allow insight into the "hot" issues of intravenous anesthesia. Finally, section VIII contains two chapters. The first discusses intravenous anesthesia and patient outcomes, and the second is an intriguing and optimistic view of the future of intravenous anesthesia.

Textbook of Intravenous Anesthesia is richly and appropriately illustrated with black and white line drawings, graphs, and tables. Unfortunately, some of the figures are so small that portions of the incorporated text are difficult to read. Also, some figures and tables appear several pages away from the text referring to them. On a positive note, the book has a useful index and is extensively referenced.

On the backside of the title page of this book, we are invited to visit the publishers on the Internet at http://www.wwilkins.com. With all the recent enthusiasm about the World Wide Web, I decided to take up the publishers on their invitation. After connecting to their main site, I easily navigated to the section pertaining to *Textbook of Intravenous Anesthesia.* Once there, I found a photographic image of the cover, the table of contents, a brief description, and a means for purchasing the textbook online. The promotional text aptly describes the book but gives a somewhat overblown view of its potential audience. Fortunately, the $89.00 price is not overblown.

The editor does not specify his intended audience, but, given the current importance and likely increased future importance of intravenous anesthesia, I would recommend this textbook for all serious students of anesthesiology.

Daniel L. Millspaugh, M.D.
Department of Anesthesia
Stanford Health Services
Stanford, California 94305-5115