they merited inclusion (the description of ring removal being an example). Some editorial comments would be unlikely to find their way into a review produced on this side of the Atlantic: the update on red cell substitutes is described as ‘close, but no cigar’, and intensive care scoring systems being likened to ‘cookbook medicine’!

Overall, the standard of papers is high, although there is no indication as to the criteria used for choosing the articles. Within the chapters, there are groups of articles around a few common themes, for example, asthma, external cardiac pacing and cervical spine injuries, but most other topics have one or two selections only, thus wisely avoiding the tendency towards becoming a textbook. This approach allows the editors to produce a real pot-pourri reflecting the great diversity of the specialty. This ranges from the very frontiers of laboratory research, for example, cerebral protection, through topic reviews and clinical trials to the borders of esoterica, including the use of hypnosis in the emergency room, the hazards of plastic diapers and the use of magnetic resonance imaging in the diagnosis of appendicitis.

At £37.50 for the 297 pages of text this will not fall within every individual’s budget. However, I can strongly recommend it for any back-pay residuals and the 1987 Year Book certainly should, with its predecessors, find a place in every departmental library, especially those involved in accident and emergency career training. Any chance of steering departmental or hospital library funds in this direction should be exploited. Although the vast majority of papers are from the United States, the paradox is that this book should have more appeal to readers on this side of the pond, particularly those who do not normally have access to the American journals. Another aspect which will appeal to the UK readership is the virtual absence of papers of relevance only to indigenous Americans. Although the final section of emergency medical services systems includes papers on malpractice and free standing emergency centres (likened to fast food medicine), these offer an interesting insight into American practice. Even the article on rattlesnake envenomation could come in useful one day!

In summary, the authors are to be congratulated on producing an excellent and stimulating collection. For the first time since The Bourne Supremacy (Ludlum R.), it was a book I honestly could not put down!

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Wound Care

By William M. Cocke Jr, Raleigh R. White IV, Dennis J. Lynch & Charles N. Verheyden

The most common error in wound management is an over-emphasis on primary wound closure. Starting with this thesis, the authors attempt to redress the balance and nail
their colours firmly to the mast in the first paragraph. It is a relief, therefore, to find that they achieve their aim without a hint of over-reaction and have produced an eminently readable and balanced account of wound care.

The first chapter is an excellent overview of wound care where the biology of wound healing is linked from the outset to established clinical principles. The authors consider a range of treatment options from primary closure to free grafting and even include some helpful advice on the choice of dressings. They introduce the concept of ‘wound control’, a theme which unites the book, and include some useful advice on the management of patients with systemic inhibition of healing.

The second chapter considers the ‘common pathway’ of wound healing which is kept lively by the use of clinical examples.

The rest of the book is, first, an overview of common wounds which then gradually polarizes to specific situations such as burns and bites, and, then, an interesting concluding chapter on difficult wounds. Specific clinical examples are given throughout which serve to re-emphasize the principles already outlined.

This book is an excellent, coherent account of wound care which states an aim and then proceeds to achieve it. As such, it deserves to be read in sequence rather than dipped into. This is an easy task as it is well written, uncluttered and relatively short. It is full of practical advice which is detailed enough to be useful without being so specific as to be constrictive. I am happy to recommend this book to anyone involved in wound care.

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Radiology in Emergency Medicine

By R. C. LEVY, H. H. HAWKINS JR & W. G. BARSAN

This book is jointly written by two clinicians and a radiologist from Cincinnati. It attempts the almost impossible task of reviewing all the radiology seen on patients presenting in the emergency department. A very good feature is that newer imaging modalities such as C. T. and ultrasound are included as emergency procedures. Even in Great Britain, where C. T. availability is patchy, it is an important method of investigation and, especially in seriously ill patients, may provide much information, which cannot be obtained by plain film radiography.

The preface states that it does not include large numbers of normal variants and, whilst there is already good literature on this subject, this does cause confusion to the casualty officer. Similarly, much emergency work involves children and a quick series of pictures of bones and skull at different ages would be very helpful to the junior casualty officer.