

SYMPOSIUM ON AESTHETIC SURGERY OF THE BREAST. Edited by JOHN Q. OWSLEY and REX A. PETERSON. Pp. xiii + 363, with 846 illustrations. (St Louis: The C. V. Mosby Company, 1978.) Price £44.50.

This book, Volume 18 of a series published by the Educational Foundation of the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons Inc., is based on the proceedings of a Symposium held in Scottsdale, Arizona in November 1975.

Of the 40 contributors all but 2 are well-known plastic surgeons working in the United States. The two outsiders are John Hueston from Melbourne and Paule Regnault from Montreal. The papers are grouped under 5 broad headings and deal with reduction mammoplasty: mammoplasty for ptosis, asymmetry and the tubular breast; subcutaneous mastectomy; mammoplasty after radical mastectomy and lastly, augmentation mammoplasty.

The editing is of a very high standard, the drawings are excellent and most of the photographs are of good quality. Some of the chapters give comprehensive lists of the relevant literature, for instance the opening contribution on the history of reduction mammoplasty lists no less than 324 references in the world literature. Some of the techniques described of breast augmentation and reconstruction have been overtaken by the development of the myocutaneous flap and direct microvascular free flap transfers, but this is unavoidable when reporting a symposium that was held 4 years ago.

This is an excellent volume, probably one of the best in this distinguished American series, and is a very good book to place in any plastic surgery library.

M. N. TEMPEST

THE PRIMARY MANAGEMENT OF HAND INJURIES. BY CAMPBELL SEMPLE, F.R.C.S. Pp. 128, with 100 illustrations. (Tunbridge Wells: Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd., 1979.) Price £4.95.

This little book by the Consultant Hand Surgeon at the Western Infirmary in Glasgow is designed as a guide for young casualty officers in the primary management of hand injuries. The general assessment of a hand injury is outlined, the pitfalls in diagnosis are clearly stated and the writer repeatedly stresses the importance of seeking immediate help from the Hand surgeon, Orthopaedic surgeon or Plastic surgeon if clinical examination suggests that deeper mischief lies beneath an apparently trivial surface wound. Indeed this is the most important lesson to be learnt from this book.

Sensible guidance is given on the suturing of wounds, the treatment of finger tip injuries, amputations and the techniques of local anaesthesia. Most of the surgical manoeuvres recommended in this book are perfectly acceptable, but some are controversial such as the use of the ulnar border of the hand as a donor site for small split skin grafts. At a time when the art of bandaging seems to have been lost forever the few paragraphs on dressings are a refreshing reminder of what surgery is all about: ". . . the dressing should look and feel good. If the patient still has an uncomfortable hand once the dressing has been applied, then there is probably something wrong."

The text itself is extremely varied in style: an unusual feature in a book written by one author. Some chapters are bright and breezy, with plenty of exclamation marks and such phrases as "lignocaine is marvellous stuff . . ." or "the muscles that produce the wiggly movements of the fingers . . ." Other chapters are much more sedate and solemn. The grammatical construction of some of the sentences is a little unusual and would puzzle anyone trying to translate them into a foreign language. For instance ". . . Many hospitals will prefer to do all nerve repairs, no matter how small, in the operating room with the aid of the microscope etc. . . ." and when the immediate repair of divided digital nerves is discussed we read ". . . it is very much easier for the patient and the surgeon to find and repair such small nerves on the day of injury". There are indeed many occasions when the surgeon is only too glad to have help from anyone in the operating theatre in finding and identifying nerve ends and fascicles: what a good idea to let the patient join in the hunt!

The illustrations by Martin Bone are clear and arresting. They use to good effect the tricks of the cartoonist who with a few strokes of the pen can alter the expression on a face to convey the feelings of joy, apprehension and pain. At first glance your reviewer found this "comic strip" caricature of the patient, who looks remarkably like a cross-eyed snowman, disconcerting and irritating, but this view was not shared by any of the medical students who were asked for their comments.

The last chapter of the book is a "quiz" based on photographs and X-rays of 12 typical hand injuries: the reader is asked specific questions to which the answers are given overleaf. This is a good book within the very strict terms of reference laid down by the author. It should be read by all medical students as part of their surgical training and studied by all new casualty officers before they start work.

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