

Book Reviews

Let's Face It. By Christine Piff. First edition. Pp. 128. (London and Sydney: Sphere Books Ltd., 1986). Price £2.50 paperback.

"Let's Face It" is a description of a patient's experiences undergoing radiotherapy and surgery for cancer of the maxilla. Mrs Piff may or may not be a talented person. She herself, by a reference to a friend's superior abilities, seems to suggest that she is not particularly gifted. The literary style of the book is ordinary. However, surgeons will recognise through her text the problems experienced by patients enduring facial mutilation. Firstly, the comprehension barrier which suddenly gives way when the realities of treatment are understood. Secondly, the doctors' embarrassment barrier when they realise that the patients have not really understood their condition until some crystallising moment. Then the realities of treatment and the subjective effects (awful) of head and neck irradiation. The symbolic significance of hair and its loss in women comes across clearly. Next, the reversion to idealised childhood memories and the use of fantasy to soften unpleasant manoeuvres. Doctors, too, will recognise the depressive psychological withdrawal on homecoming. Should psychotropic drugs be given? Do doctors really understand the subjective response of patients to treatment?

When young adults first contemplate the reality of their own death, the commonest reaction is concern for the void that will be left in their families or social groups. Mrs Piff describes such feelings. This negative attitude has matured in her into a positive determination to help fellow sufferers. Facial surgeons must hope her self-help group will flourish—our results will be better. Mrs Piff might be "ordinary" but that which she has conceived and started makes her extraordinary, maybe unique.

C. R. RAYNER

Atlas of Tumours of the Facial Skeleton. B. J. Prein, W. Remagen, B. Spiessl and E. Uehlinger. Pp. x + 162 with 264 figs (some colour). (Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, Tokyo: Springer-Verlag, 1986). Price DM368.

Professor Lucas's book *The Pathology of Tumours of the Oral Tissues* (Churchill Livingstone, 1965) has for 20 years been the standard text for head and neck surgeons dealing with rare tumours of the facial skeleton. We now have an admirable text devoted specifically to facial skeletal tumours.

Professor Prein and his colleagues, members of the German-Austrian-Swiss Association for the Study of Tumours of the Jaws and Face (Dösak), founded in 1971, have collected all the information about tumours of the facial skeleton in the German speaking world.

The resulting atlas has been well prepared; there is a clarity of presentation, a profusion of illustrations both radiographic and histological, a comprehensive list of references and an irreproachable index. This is an excellent book, to be highly recommended.

As a result, Professor Lucas's book has become dated although still a worthy reference volume. This new volume is an essential

addition to the library of head and neck surgeons from whatever discipline. It will be continually referred to by the 'physician' presented with a rare facial bony tumour.

N. M. BREACH

Atlas of Head and Neck Surgery. By Carl E. Silver. First edition. Pp. xii + 325 with 96 figs. (New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne: Churchill Livingstone, 1986). Price £80.

In the preface to this book the Editor says it is orientated towards the practice of a head and neck oncologist with basic training in general surgery or otolaryngology. This is certainly reflected by the content and authorship and by many of the techniques shown.

Each chapter describes, after a brief introduction, a selection of operative procedures in a specific region of the head and neck, with numerous step-by-step artists' drawings and written text referring to them. In some chapters there are a number of black and white photographs and coloured drawings. In many instances discussion of indications for the procedures shown is only brief, and results and postoperative problems are really not covered at all. The book does not claim to present comprehensively all the procedures which may be required in each area. Of the nine chapters, two are of little interest or relevance to the plastic surgeon who works in the head and neck cancer field, being on thyroid surgery and on the surgical treatment of hyperparathyroidism.

One chapter of 26 pages is on reconstruction. Part of it is by Dr Ariyan with his, now familiar, diagrams of musculocutaneous flaps in the head and neck. Most of the material is presented but briefly, in particular that about free tissue transfer, and any trainee intending to reconstruct an operative defect would do well to read beyond this chapter. For that purpose a bibliography is given at the end of each chapter.

In other chapters reconstructive methods are shown, some of which would be considered obsolete by most plastic surgeons now, and others which are generally not used by plastic surgeons but are of interest, such as split skin grafts in the mouth covering bone after marginal mandibular resection.

In an atlas one expects a good standard of diagrams and drawings. The quality of these varies a lot in this book, being drawn by a number of artists. The work of one of these is superb but that of others ranges right down to rudimentary and disappointing line sketches.

Plastic surgeons will find little use for this book. While exposures and techniques of resection are adequately covered for the most part, at least for the sample of procedures selected, one would hope that those in other specialties intending to perform their own reconstructions would look rather further along the library shelf in preparing for that.

M. D. POOLE

The Hand: Fundamentals of Therapy. First edition. By Judith Boscheinen-Morrin, Victoria Davey and W. Bruce Connolly. Pp. xii + 225 with 159 illustrations. (London, Boston, Durban, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington: Butterworth & Co., 1985). Price £15 paperback.

One of the problems facing authors in Hand Surgery is to find a succinct and distinctive title which has not been used before.