

laser user". Certainly, there are available a number of books which treat the specialty usage of the laser in a manner more helpful to the experienced laser user.

The book is concluded by a comprehensive and useful list of 33 appendices ranging from "practical tips for laser purchasing" to "lasers and the law" where possible scenarios for law suits are described.

It is tempting to compare this book with a not dissimilar British publication (*Medical Lasers: Current and Clinical Practice* by Carruth and McKenzie, published by Adam Hilger Ltd., 1986). It would be realised that laser users form such a heterogeneous group that it is quite difficult to meet adequately their differing requirements in a single publication.

In conclusion, this is a useful book to read before purchasing or installing a laser machine but it is felt that a plastic surgeon would not find it very helpful in the clinical situation.

A. A. QUABA

Head and Hands, an Era in Plastic Surgery. By Sir Benjamin K. Rank. Pp. x+292. (London: Gower Medical Publishing, 1987). Price £25.

Sir Benjamin's autobiography is a "damned good read". My wife enjoyed it as much as did I. It includes many black and white photographs. Starting with his arrival in London two years after his qualification in 1937, when the "Big Four" dominated plastic surgery in the UK and the Empire, he refers to medical practice arrangements there which "provided good reasons for the great upheaval that was soon to come to the British National Health Service" (page 6). He was trained by Rainsford Mowlem, mainly. From London he went to the Western Desert with the 2nd Australian General Hospital.

For most readers the early chapters are "history" with an informed commentary. The book is written to appeal both to plastic surgeons and to the lay public, and it contains many clinical records of dramatic cases presented in a colloquial style. Some are perhaps longer than their clinical content warrants. During the latter part of World War II Sir Benjamin had 100 beds for plastic surgery in Melbourne. The biography contains value judgements on many of the great of plastic and reconstructive surgery—fully acceptable from a man of Sir Benjamin's stature. His revelations about the demise of the Nuffield chair of plastic surgery are doubly interesting at a time when there is the possibility of a new chair in the UK.

After establishing the specialty in Australia, Sir Benjamin travelled widely, with greater ease than would have been possible for a UK NHS consultant. He gives the explanation on page 102: "Working in partnership or as a group not only provided an all day, every day availability and service to patients—it had two other advantages. It permitted easier escape from the scene—more frequent overseas visits to keep pace with developments elsewhere or to promote diffusion of teaching and practice through our own, as well as in neighbouring countries. It also allowed me to take a more active part in general hospital and professional affairs—an erstwhile obligation now, unfortunately, often sidestepped—this brought me into contact with some good leaders". America (1947), Singapore and Malaya (1953–54), India (1955, 1960 et al), Canada as Commonwealth Professor (1958) were influenced by his teaching and in his accounts are vignettes of political and medical personalities as well as elements of travelogue. Pakistan gets a bad press.

Because he played the key role in introducing the specialty into Australia, and the vital additional role of gaining for it there academic recognition, considerable space is devoted to the medical politics involved—but perhaps not too much when read with Australian eyes. The story ranges through the International Congress in Melbourne and the meeting in Holland in the year of his BAPS Presidency in 1965—the Leiden Meeting was the first I attended as a newly appointed consultant.

Along with his initial welcoming of the NHS in Britain and his later regret of its appalling bureaucratic machinery, Australia is not spared: "The whole package emanating from State intrusion has promoted the worst in professional people, right from the time of graduation when they now face wages board determinations—industrial relations hassle, hours on duty, overtime rates and such matters as never previously would have been thought of. Public attitudes, led by the media, bear witness to an all-time low in the esteem of the medical profession and to widespread dissatisfaction with one newfound 'system' after another, despite soaring costs to the taxpayer" (page 226). The hospital locker correspondence of page 238 could be duplicated in many an NHS consultant's files—it is too familiar to be funny! Interestingly, Sir Benjamin's last chapter is about a recent visit to Britain to see old colleagues and relatives—the UK is his plastic surgical Alma Mater.

A. F. WALLACE

Principilization of Plastic Surgery. By D. Ralph Millard, Jr. Pp. xxiii+685, illustrated. (Boston, Toronto: Little Brown & Co., 1986). Price £135. ISBN 0316 57153 9.

In 1957 Sir Harold Gillies and the young Ralph Millard published their classic work *The Principles and Art of Plastic Surgery* in which they set out 16 principles. One always suspected that, while the substance of this book belonged to the Master—Gillies, the style of writing and production owed much to the junior author. These suspicions were confirmed by the three volumes of *Cleft Craft*, and this new book by Dr Millard is clearly out of the same stable. Its title will doubtless raise a few eyebrows but the obvious title was already used for that other book 30 years ago and Dr Millard has merely applied his Principle 26—"Imagination sparks Innovation". For this book details 33 principles, mastery of which will give the plastic surgeon the weapons to overcome any clinical problem; indeed, many are of much wider application and indicate a philosophy of life.

Over the years the original 16 principles have been revised and their number expanded. Each one has a chapter to itself, grouped into sections. There are Preparational, Executorial, Innovational, Contributinal and Inspirational principles. Each is illustrated by cases and anecdotes. The author's friends—eminent colleagues and ex-trainees—were asked to contribute cases that illustrated what they felt to be important plastic surgery principles, and many are included while other examples are drawn from outside the field of medicine. At heart, however, this is the summation of Dr Millard's own experience and thinking over a long career. He reviews almost every one of the many contributions he has made to Plastic Surgery, deriving lessons from each. Many of the cases have therefore been published before and there is considerable overlap and repetition but the author defends himself stoutly on this charge, quoting