

BOOK REVIEWS

PLASTIC SURGERY IN THE TROPICS: *an introduction for medical students and surgeons.* By J. O. OLUWASANMI, M.D.(London), F.R.C.S.(Ed.). First Edition. Pp. 196 with 104 illustrations. (Macmillan Tropical and Sub-tropical Texts. London. Macmillan 1979.) Price £9.95 Hardback. £4.95 Paperback.

This volume written by a plastic surgeon who is also Head of the Department of Surgery in the University of Ibadan, is designed as an introduction for medical students and general surgeons and is based on the author's personal experience in Nigeria. It is one of a series of medical text books (Macmillan International College Editions) now available at very low cost in developing countries and produced under the general editorship of Dr J. O. Grant of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

This particular volume is profoundly disappointing. The text is uneven in style and content. There is a great deal of "padding" in some chapters (boils, whitlows, abscesses) a very scrappy section on the classification and management of wounds, serious spelling mistakes ("adrexal", "flexeral", "orthopathomogram", "cruifix") and the "tropical" content is surprisingly thin. The section on burns contains much accurate and important information, but it is so badly arranged in the text that its usefulness is seriously compromised. Syndactyly, a very common anomaly is briefly described, but not its treatment. Hypospadias is described in very general terms and a one-stage method of repair is mentioned but not illustrated. Is this not the kind of information that the general surgeons working in the tropics would like to have available?

There is something sadly amiss with the quality of the original photographs and/or their reproduction (Fig. 2.2 or Fig. 5.1). The same is true of the illustrations. Some of them are extremely crude (Figs. 1.1 and 2.6): some are incomprehensible (Figs. 4.11b: 8.1: 8.3b: 8.8). There are also discrepancies between the descriptions in the text and the legends beneath the photographs. For instance, Fig. 2.5 is a face, not the dorsum of the hand: Fig. 2.6 is a rotation flap in the text but a transposition flap in the caption and Fig. 2.7 shows a homograft of a white rabbit ear in a brown rabbit, not a transposition flap. A diagrammatic representation of eyelet wiring would be far more useful than the miserable X-ray reproduced in Fig. 5.2.

There is not a word anywhere in the text about the difficulties of anaesthesia for the routine operations let alone the special problems of surgery for cleft palate, cancrum oris or jaw tumours. Nor is there any mention of the care (and cost) of skin grafting knives. An illustration of an electric/pneumatic dermatome adorns the book jacket of this volume. This may well be a reasonable tool in the Teaching Hospital in Ibadan (though this was not my experience); in a peripheral hospital it would be a luxurious superfluity. I feel rather the same way about this book.

MICHAEL N. TEMPEST

SURGERY OF THE HAND-UNIT IN ADULTS AND CHILDREN. By HOSEIN A. MOTAMED, M.D. First Edition. Pp. 1614, with 528 colour plates and 473 illustrations. Two volumes. (Chicago: H. A. Motamed, Inc., Medical Publishers, 7141 North Kedzie Avenue, 1979). Price \$250.00.

There have been and always will be occasions when scientists, poets, philosophers and doctors wish to publish some of their thoughts and work for private circulation only: indeed, particularly if they are artists, they may well help with the actual printing. But such volumes are usually small in size and number and rarely circulate beyond a fairly close circle of friends.

But here we have something quite different. This massive volume of work, distributed in the USA and 128 other countries, is written by Dr Hosein A. Motamed who is, in his own words, an "Independent Medical Scientist and a practising orthopaedic and hand surgeon". He is also the Founder, President and Editor of the Chicago Publishing Company that bears the same name and which has published his book. The two very heavy volumes, weighing over 6 kilograms, arrived on my desk with a glossy publicity leaflet announcing the publication as "the most comprehensive, scientific, colourful book on 'Hand Surgery' ever published in the history of medicine".

It is only fair to say that these sweeping claims are completely unjustified. The book is repetitive, turgid, tedious to read and tiresome to hold. The text is so full of appalling misprints that one is driven to question the scientific value of much of the writing. On one page alone (p. 182) we read the following strange words: "autografin" (twice); "infectin"; "infection"; "sould"; "supress"; "converge"; "muscle" instead of "must be". On other pages we find pig skin described as a "bilogic" or even a "biologic" dressing. The whole concept of the "hand-unit" is very poorly defined and the constant repetition of this ugly compound word when the simple word hand is so more explicit, has a powerful unsettling effect on the reader's equanimity. Indeed after a few chapters of this text I could well sympathise with the Tailor of Gloucester who in Beatrix Potter's story complains that he is "worn to a ravelling!"

As for the colour photographs, some of them indeed are excellent—but taken collectively they do not compensate for the gross inadequacies and irrelevancies in the text.

In his preamble to the book the author writes that it has taken him more than 11 years of his time to prepare these two books... "All aspects of this project including writing, typing, photography, medical illustrations, designing, composition (phototypesetting, re-editing, proof-reading, paste-up, keylining etc.), publishing, financing and world wide distribution, have been my own individual work..." But this "Do-it-yourself" technique has no place in the production of medical texts in the 20th Century. The author's hope that these two volumes "will remain as a monument to medical science and will become a classic in medical libraries throughout the world for many years to come" is just not on. These extremely costly volumes will more likely be found propping up the cine projector in the seminar room or languishing, in Macaulay's words, among "the dust and silence of the upper shelf".

MICHAEL N. TEMPEST

COMPLICATIONS OF HEAD AND NECK SURGERY. Edited by JOHN J. CONLEY, M.D. First Edition. xviii + pp. 524 with 215 illustrations and 16 tables. (Philadelphia, London, Toronto. W. B. Saunders Company, 1979) Price £20.

This volume under the distinguished editorship of John Conley, has 35 contributors, almost all American, of whom more than a third are E.N.T. Surgeons and who often share between themselves the joint authorship of some of the chapters. Conley on his own has contributed no less than 10 of the 28 chapters and it is a great credit to him that these are amongst the best in the book. There are excellent contributions on anaesthetic complications in head and neck surgery, on the complications of radiotherapy and the use of antineoplastic drugs in head and neck cancer.

As one would expect from the surgical interests of the co-authors, much of the text is taken up with E.N.T. problems and it is in these chapters that there is some unfortunate overlap and needless repetition. The chapters that are contributed by the plastic surgeons on facial trauma, complications of aesthetic surgery and the treatment of scars, are interesting but mention very little that has not already been extensively dealt with in other texts published in the United States.

The production is of an extremely high standard. The illustrations are all beautifully clear with simple but succinct captions. The references in the text are all recent, relevant and quote in full the titles of the papers to which reference has been made. For this simple achievement alone, many an Editor will wish to have this book ready for use. The price is eminently reasonable. This should allow it the wide circulation it deserves and help to reduce the number of unfortunate but not incurable complications which can so often appear in this anatomical region.

MICHAEL N. TEMPEST

COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS RELATED TO CLEFT LIP AND PALATE. Edited by KENNETH R. BZUCH. Second Edition. Pp. xv + 368: illustrated. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979). Price \$16.50.

This is a revised and expanded volume of the 1972 book of the same name, together with chapters from the "parent book", *Cleft Lip and Palate: Surgical, Dental and Speech Aspects*, edited by Grabb, Rosenstein and Bzoch, 1971. It is stated to be a "basic professional course of study" and whilst many students of speech pathology might be daunted by its detail, it is, without doubt, a useful contribution to cleft palate literature. Twenty-three authors contribute to the volume from the view points of speech pathology and therapy, psychology, orthodontics, audiology, otolaryngology and paediatrics. Many review comprehensively the American research on their topic and for students wishing to study further, there are impressive reference lists after each chapter. The chapter on oral sensory function gives no less than 188.

The three main aspects of the book are: General, Diagnostic and Habilitative. The General Section provides a review of the essential anatomy and physiology and embryology, well illustrated with clear diagrams. A chapter on classification discusses its problems and rationale. Classifications are critically reviewed and recommendations are made for a standard classification, based on those of the American Cleft Palate Association in the early 60's. In the presentation of the Craniofacial Team, the author, Herbert Koepp-Baker, states that "an emotional and intellectual companionship must be engendered" and "the team has dimensions that transcend mere togetherness". Whilst such rhetoric may be less than well received by British readers, the general theme is of a team which is stimulating to its members and beneficial to patients.

Section Two, on Diagnostic Aspects, provides the largest part of the book, and covers comprehensively the aetiology of cleft palate speech and its diagnosis. Topics include congenital and acquired palatopharyngeal insufficiency, dental and occlusal hazards, hearing problems, oral-sensory function and language acquisition. At times, the authors do not restrict themselves to the cleft palate subject but, as for example in the latter two topics, write a general chapter on speech pathology which, I feel, goes beyond the brief of the book.

Assessment of Speech is covered with reference to major current clinical and instrumental techniques. The need for objective indices is emphasised with more detailed data for comparative or controlled research. The Bzoch Error Pattern Diagnostic Articulation Tests are presented, analysing speech sounds as:

- (i) distortion;
- (ii) simple substitution;
- (iii) gross substitution; and
- (iv) omission.