

these flaps (and their further variations) would need to be gleaned from a careful reading of the general section headed "Raising the Flap" or from further references.

No matter: this is an excellent work which covers the whole free flap spectrum. It offers honest guidance on the choice of flap, practical help with the operative procedure and enough inspiration to the microsurgically-aware reader to seek out and update details from current literature. It should find a place in every reconstructive surgeon's personal collection and I predict that (like that other practical guide of Mrs Beeton's) it will go on from strength to strength.

C. T. K. KHOO

**Skin Surgery.** Edited by E. Epstein and E. Epstein Jr. Sixth edition. Pp. xv+676, illustrated. (Philadelphia, London, Toronto, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, Tokyo, Hong Kong: W. B. Saunders Co., 1987). Price £85.

To write this book the two editors (dermatologists) have used 58 contributors; of these only a handful are plastic surgeons. The text is now half the two volume length it had reached when the fifth edition was reviewed in this Journal in 1983, and the publishers have changed. With 55 chapters in 676 pages, the length of chapters varies from one to eighty-two pages, and this variation in length is matched by an inequality in the value and relevance of the contributions. For a sixth edition it is still an immature publication. It has lacked firm editorial control and there is much repetition, with surgical techniques (including clinical illustrations of facial crease lines) discussed by a plastic surgeon in Chapter 6 (12 pages), and also by a dermatologist in Chapter 10 (40 pages). References appear variously in either numerical or alphabetical order and many are incorrect, *i.e.* reference 57 p. 35 should be dated 1976, and on p. 151 adjacent references 20 and 21 should give Arons consistent initials and the date for reference 21 should be 1966; reference 43 (p. 151) and reference 7 (p. 558) incorrectly spell Elder and Clark as Elden and Clear. These are random reference checks and it seems likely that other errors exist. Many chapters deal with the chosen subjects very superficially and this is well illustrated in Chapter 38 on "Eyelid skin surgery" which in just over 9 pages "covers" congenital, degenerative and neoplastic conditions.

It seems clear from a study of this book that it is not aimed at plastic surgeons (or dermatologists, dare I say) in the United Kingdom. It does appear to have been written for that peculiar breed of "dermatologic surgeons" in North America—although perhaps they exist elsewhere.

With 128/676 pages (almost 20% of the whole book), 330 illustrations and 201 references devoted to the management of the balding scalp, and 8 pages and 10 references given to cutaneous burn injury, the book may well represent a balanced view of dermatologic surgery practice in the United States. In the editorial footnote to the chapter on tissue expansion is written "the most important new chapter in this book"; this chapter is less than 6 pages long with 7 references which are not all accurate.

In their endeavour to appear to cover the whole field the editors have included sections on liposuction, oral surgery and surgery of the male and female genitalia.

After reading this volume, my overwhelming concern is that the inexperienced practitioner will embark on one of the many procedures mentioned without a balanced view of the technical

problems and complications involved. I do not consider the book good value for money, and it is very likely to mislead a trainee whatever his/her speciality.

R. W. GRIFFITHS

**The Interphalangeal Joints. *The Hand and Upper Limb*, Volume 1.** Edited by William H. Bowers. Pp. 274 with 298 figures and tables. (Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1987). Price £50. ISBN 443 032 165.

This is the first volume to appear in the series "The Hand and Upper Limb" currently in preparation by Churchill Livingstone. The series has got off to a superb start. Dr Bowers has assembled contributions from distinguished writers on both sides of the Atlantic, and the result is a detailed and authoritative account of the interphalangeal joints in their normal state, and affected by disease and injury.

This confined field may seem too small to justify an entire book, but the result of so detailed an approach is an extremely valuable addition to the literature of hand surgery. The book is so well written and edited that it can be read from cover to cover with enjoyment and without any feeling of repetition or unnecessary detail, and from another point of view it provides an important reference source, well indexed and furnished with full references.

There are no weak contributions to single out for criticism. The first two chapters by the editor and Dr Littler respectively are a delight to read, and the third chapter by Dr Paul Brand and co-authors on biomechanics is full of engineering detail which is of importance but somewhat indigestible if the reader lacks an engineering background.

The next section of the book is devoted to repair and reconstruction following injury, including capsular injuries, fractures and fracture-dislocations, and injuries to the extensor surface and the tendons related to the IP joints. The third section on arthritis and arthrosis deals in detail with rheumatoid and related conditions, degenerative arthritis and two excellent chapters on arthrodesis and arthroplasty. The only small area of duplication is in dual coverage of "mucous cysts" in this section and the chapter on developmental conditions, which is more detailed.

Professor Buck-Gramcko's chapter on congenital conditions affecting the IP joints is masterly and very useful, and the book ends with three very enjoyable and most important chapters on rehabilitation—surgeons can learn a great deal from this section written by therapists.

If the succeeding volumes live up to the standard set by this one, the series has great promise, though this book stands on its own and will be enjoyed and frequently turned to by the growing body of surgeons with a major interest in the hand. Highly recommended.

D. M. EVANS

**The Arterial Anatomy of Skin Flaps.** By George C. Cormack and B. George Lamberty. 1st Edition. Pp. 455, illustrated. (Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1986). Price £125. ISBN 443 03214 9.

Over the past ten years the number of books on plastic surgery has increased at an alarming rate especially when one considers