

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

what was available only a relatively short time ago. Sadly not all of these have been of the highest quality and have often repeated already well-documented material, so much so that one may have been forgiven for asking why they were necessary. It is a great pleasure, therefore, to welcome a new book by British authors which is both stimulating and fills a gap in the plastic surgery literature. The differing backgrounds of the authors are complementary and the strong anatomical basis of the book is carefully balanced with ample practical surgical material. Although much of its content records and summarises what is known about the blood supply of the skin and the flaps we use, this information, which is supplemented and strengthened by much of the authors' own fascinating work, is presented in such a well organised fashion that it makes up a really excellent and worthwhile book. Most of the material has been drawn from relatively recent work, but the authors are careful to point out that a good deal was recorded years ago and rediscovered only recently when the need to find new flaps was stimulated by modern plastic surgical techniques.

The sequence of the book is well conceived and presented. A brief introductory chapter provides a fascinating summary of the historical phases of the development of skin flaps, recalling the names of past and present innovators. The authors' concept of anatomical, dynamic and potential territories of skin flaps is introduced in this section and this, combined with other definitions, e.g. axially and angiotomes, helps clarify the following text. The recent introduction of the concept of the angiosome (Taylor and Palmer, 1987), which postdates this work, now adds a further dimension.

The next section summarises the anatomy and physiology of the microcirculation, debates the mechanisms of the delay phenomenon and reviews the controversial subject of drug use in the manipulation and salvage of skin flaps. In the light of the numerous safe flaps which are described in subsequent chapters one cannot help conclude that these techniques are mainly a thing of the past.

Then follows the real meat of the book. The basic principles involved in direct cutaneous, musculocutaneous and fasciocutaneous systems are each covered thoroughly in separate chapters and there follows a detailed section on the blood supply of the skin by regions. The book concludes with a practical seventh chapter on the vascular territories and clinical applications of the planning of the flaps. These important sections will prove invaluable to the practising surgeon. No longer will it be necessary to refer to various anatomical texts, each with differing nomenclatures or search for articles on flap design when faced with a problematical skin defect, for the operator will find most of his needs satisfied in these pages. The one area that one might criticise is the section on the hand which is not up to the high standard set in the rest of the book.

Comprehensive references are listed after each section and summarised in two indices (subject and principal author index), while two helpful appendices cover terminology and the technical data used in the authors' anatomical studies.

The book is well written and understandable. There are few spelling mistakes but these can be irritating, especially when they are inconsistent and involve surgeons' names. The ample illustrations are generally excellent and enhance the text but a few are so small that they need magnification to be read with comfort. This is a shame since the diagrams which illustrate the authors' own important work on the fasciocutaneous systems are particularly at fault. Some perfectionists will be irritated by the format of the book. Each page consists of two columns of text and these look very untidy in the unjustified form. There

may also be objections to paying for so much blank paper. The whiteness of one page is only blemished by a single reference in small print! These are small points but it is a pity that the publishers have let the authors down a little by not devoting as much attention to the layout of the text as the writers have obviously done in the anatomical observations, recordings and demonstrations of the clinical possibilities which they explain so expertly. This criticism aside, there is no doubt about the debt we owe to the authors and the obvious effort put into this book, which is surely destined to become a classic and a must for all practising or training in plastic surgery.

P. J. SYKES

## Reference

Taylor, G. I. and Palmer, J. H. (1987). The vascular territories (angiosomes) of the body: experimental study and clinical applications. *British Journal of Plastic Surgery*, **40**, 113.

**The Paralysed Hand.** Edited by Douglas W. Lamb. Pp. 251 with 180 figures and tables. (Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1986). Price £42. ISBN 0443 03298 X.

This is a beautifully produced book dealing comprehensively with a difficult subject, with contributions from an international panel mainly from the United States of America but also from the United Kingdom and Hong Kong. The contributors have been chosen because of their special interests and experience and this shows in the high quality of the finished work.

The book is in five sections:

- 1 Aetiology and Investigation.
- 2 Common Causes of the Paralysed Hand.
- 3 Biomechanics of Tendon Transfer.
- 4 Management of Pain.
- 5 Role of the Therapist.

The introduction in the first chapter is quite detailed but perhaps not aimed at the same level as the rest of the book, though being rather elementary is no bad thing. The categorisation of causes of paralysis of the hand into upper and lower motor neurone disorders is confusing when in upper motor neurone disorders are included such things as cerebellar disease and hysterical dysfunction of the extremity.

In the chapter on clinical examination it is emphasised correctly that the hand is only part of the patient, but the accuracy of some of the statements made must be questioned. At one point the author talks of "flexing the humerus" and also describes the nerve supply of the extensor carpi radialis brevis as the main trunk of the radial nerve, and there is a lack of detail in the description of the nerve supply to the triceps which can be very important clinically. In the same chapter the description of the testing of brachio-radialis is rather inadequate.

In the chapter entitled "The Anatomy of Peripheral Nerves in the Upper Limb" there are again some inaccuracies, Horner's syndrome being inadequately described; the relations of the cords of the brachial plexus to the axillary artery are incorrectly stated and there is an error in the statement that the nerve to subclavius contains fibres from the fifth and sixth cervical roots. The description of the sensory nerve supply to the digits is both inadequate and inaccurate. There is no mention of any afferent fibres in the posterior interosseous nerve and it is perhaps