

strengthened this philosophical outlook, and all his future decisions seem to have been made with reference to this concept.

In his choices throughout life fortune favoured him: in his marriage; in surviving the experience of active service in North Africa, Arnhem, and Norway; in joining the editorial staff of the *British Medical Journal* at a critical time in the development of the National Health Service; in arranging to meet a botanist, Francis Rose, who introduced him to the study of plants in their natural habitat; in his establishment of the British Lichen Society when the Natural History Museum had just appointed a scientist to take charge of its collections; in meeting a kindred spirit in Ursula Duncan; and in accepting an invitation to study the lichens of Uganda and Kenya which resulted in 17 most fruitful years of research recorded in some 30 published papers and gathered together in book form with Hildur Krog as his co-author.

The adventures of these exploits couched in flowing language and punctuated by poetic allusions form the substance of this biography with consummate pen pictures of the co-workers involved. But it would be wrong to think that the author was a passive recipient of these turns of good fortune. 'Fortuna fortes favet' is only part of the whole truth. Persistence of the prepared mind is equally favoured.

Dougal best reveals himself when he writes: 'I delight in the study of natural history because it establishes a sense of kinship with creation. No longer solitary and puzzled, I feel restored to the sea of genes that everywhere casts up living organisms in all their variety of form and function. In analysing their relationships I unconsciously count myself and my friends among them, finding a harmony between us in the matrix of our genetic concordance.'

Only a father of a happy family and a respected member of a close knit community could write in this way. In terms of his own outlook herein possibly lies his crowning achievement. Little wonder that Dougal subscribes to the philosophy of Taoism, the main tenet of which is the unity of all forms of life, a philosophy which appeals to the contemplative and particularly to those for whom the inner life is reality in itself.

STEPHEN MILLER

**Vitreous Microsurgery.** 2nd Edn. By STEVE CHARLES. Pp. 235. £56.00. Williams and Wilkins: London: 1987.

The second edition of Dr Steve Charles's classic text is an update on his previous work on decision making in vitreoretinal surgery. The book is aimed at ophthalmologists with an interest (and preferably with a certain amount of experience) in the surgical treatment of retinal disorders.

After outlining the principles of instrumentation in vitreoretinal surgery the author guides us through the intricacies of various types of operations on the vitreous in both the anterior and the posterior segments. Dr Charles makes use of algorithms to illustrate how to anticipate the various events and complications which may arise during complex vitreoretinal surgery. I find this approach helpful, as it enables the surgeon and the theatre staff to be prepared for,

and to react quickly to, the often sudden changes in the surgical plan.

The book is divided into chapters on a variety of topics such as proliferative vitreo-retinopathy, epimacular proliferation, trauma, and giant retinal tears. I particularly enjoyed the chapters on surgery for proliferative diabetic retinopathy and for the retinopathy of prematurity, subjects in which the author has particular expertise, having pioneered many of the operations described here. The text is illustrated by a few black-and-white photographs, but the book's real strength lies in the many simple but clear line drawings. These are used to emphasise the author's views on the rights and wrongs of various techniques used in vitreoretinal surgery.

The style of the book is somewhat unusual and in places rather authoritative, but those of us who have the privilege of knowing Steve Charles will appreciate his forthright approach to the subject. I have no hesitation in recommending this book to all colleagues interested in vitreoretinal surgery, and it is a must for all departmental libraries.

Z.J.GREGOR

**Ocular Circulation and Neovascularization: Documenta Ophthalmologica Proceedings Series 50.**

Eds D BENEZRA, S J RYAN, B M GLASER, R P MURPHY. Pp. 573. £105.00. Kluwer: Dordrecht, Netherlands. 1987.

This volume is a compendium of 88 scientific papers presented at the First Symposium on the Ocular Circulation and Neovascularisation held in Jerusalem, Israel, in September 1986. Dedicated to the memory of Isaac Michaelson, an early pioneer in this field, the book contains a wide range of clinical and basic scientific papers reflecting the interest of morphologists, physiologists, cell biologists, biochemists, and pathologists as well as ophthalmic physicians and surgeons in the ocular circulation and the phenomenon of neovascularisation.

The text is loosely organised into two parts. The first deals with retinal blood flow and vein occlusion, diabetic retinopathy, retinopathy of prematurity, age related macular degeneration, and some aspects of chronic ocular inflammation. The individual papers are wide ranging, with some inevitable overlap of subject matter. The figures and photographs are mostly of good quality, though more stringent editing would have improved the cohesiveness of the text and avoided numerous and unnecessary errors of spelling and syntax and inaccuracies in the reference sections.

The second part of the book is devoted to ocular vasoproliferation in its many forms, with separate sections on neovascularisation of the cornea, the iris, the angle of the eye, and the retina and choroid. A further chapter considers numerous putative angiogenic factors, their origin, nature, and effects on retinal vascular cells in vivo and in vitro. Arguments for the modulating effects of the retinal pigment epithelium on retinal and choroidal vasoproliferation are rehearsed in some detail but as yet without firm conclusion. The concluding section summarises the views of selected investigators in current concepts of ocular neovascularisation.



## Vitreous Microsurgery

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*Br J Ophthalmol* 1989 73: 934

doi: 10.1136/bjo.73.11.934

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