

Book reviews

Reconstructive and Plastic Surgery of the Eyelids. By F. P. ENGLISH and W. A. KEATS. 1975. Pp. 95, figs. Thomas, Springfield, Ill. (\$11)

This book begins with a chapter on basic techniques but it also includes less accepted procedures such as the transfer of full-thickness composite eyelid grafts from one eyelid to another. It continues with a series of short chapters describing a wide range of different surgical procedures which the authors use in the orbital region. These are extremely well and copiously illustrated with excellent diagrams as well as clinical photographs. The book is commendably brief and only the salient features of the different techniques are described. It is orientated towards presenting the authors' techniques to the practising ophthalmic surgeon and not to reviewing established procedures. The clinical indications for any particular procedure are not discussed in any detail relative to the available alternatives, and therefore this is not a good book for the embryo ophthalmologist who wants to see the whole subject in perspective. There must, however, be limitations with any book of this size and what Mr English and Mr Keats do achieve is a dynamic presentation of ideas which should provide the practising ophthalmologist with some useful additional techniques when operating in the eyelid region.

J. R. O. COLLIN

Symposium of Glaucoma: Transactions of the New Orleans Academy of Ophthalmology.

By D. R. ANDERSON, S. M. DRANCE, M. A. GALIN, J. R. LYNN, S. M. PODOS, K. T. RICHARDSON JR, and R. N. SHAFFER. 1975. Pp. 387, figs, tables, refs. Mosby, St Louis; Kimpton, London (£17.80)

This book contains the papers presented and the round table discussions at the twenty-third session of the New Orleans Academy of Ophthalmology in 1974. The subject was glaucoma, and the contributors' photographs at the beginning of the book reveal expressions of faint surprise, subdued scepticism, and friendly cheerfulness, all of which were doubtless displayed from time to time throughout the symposium. Judging from the papers and discussions, one feels bound to conclude that the meeting must also have evoked sustained interest, because many aspects of glaucoma received attention and the contributors always had something to say which was based on their own special knowledge or experience.

Topics are not arranged in any particular order but nothing seems to have been lost by the abandonment of the usual arrangement. The various sections on surgical procedures contain detailed descriptions with many practical tips based on wide experience, and are generally well illustrated by simple drawings. The style ranges from the formal to the chatty, a variation which keeps reminding us that we are reading the reports of a meeting and which recreates for us, perhaps, the atmosphere that prevailed.

There are two sections by Richardson on drug delivery systems. The usual way of giving a drug is by doses, and this applies to substances administered orally and to those instilled as drops into the eye. This means

that the concentration of the drug in the tissues is initially high, becoming lower as the time after the first dose increases and the time for the next dose approaches; therefore there tends to be an overdosage—underdosage sequence with its attendant disadvantages. The system to be preferred is one which releases a drug where it is required at a constant rate. The various possibilities are discussed not only in general, but also as they apply to the eye. A few such systems are already in use and their future development certainly warrants close study.

In another section, Anderson looks critically at the various hypotheses of glaucomatous cupping and finds them lacking in some respects. He suggests that raised intraocular pressure causes glial damage in the optic nerve head, as a result of which the capillaries lose some of their support. In this vulnerable state they collapse under the abnormal intraocular pressure. Thus the hypothesis does not deny that ischaemia is involved, but suggests that the levels of intraocular pressure commonly found in chronic simple glaucoma would not be high enough to produce damaging ischaemia without the initial factor of loss of glial support to the capillaries.

Lynn tackles the problem of how to explain arcuate scotomata, passing smoothly from temporal to nasal quadrants, in terms of the arrangement of nerve fibres at the optic nerve head. His diagrams give a lucidity of explanation which could hardly be achieved verbally.

These examples are quoted to indicate the level of interest to be found in all the sections. Anyone who looks after glaucomatous patients is bound to find something stimulating and helpful in this book. J. GLOSTER

Vitrectomy: A Pars Plana Approach. By R. MACHEMER. 1975. Pp. 136, 87 figs, refs. Grune & Stratton, New York (price not given)

This excellent book presents the author's personal experience, based on over 500 vitrectomies. The emphasis is on vitrectomy technique, rather than on the evaluation of indications and results.

The first chapter describes in great detail the VISC itself, the viewing system, and illuminating system. The second chapter deals briefly with the selection of patients and preoperative evaluation. Special emphasis is placed on the value of the bright-flash ERG and ultrasound in the preoperative examination of patients with vitreous opacities. The third chapter gives a detailed description of surgical techniques and complications. The four basic movements of the VISC are described and then the more complicated manoeuvres dealing with the peeling of epiretinal membranes in cases of massive periretinal proliferation; the treatment of giant retinal tears by intraocular gas tamponade is described in detail. The fourth chapter deals with the postoperative period. The brief appendix written by W. E. Benson is designed to help the beginner by practising on rabbits' eyes.

Dr Machemer emphasizes that pars plana vitrectomy is not an easy technique to learn and should be reserved for those who intend to specialize in this type of surgery. This book is highly recommended for all ophthalmologists, particularly those who are contemplating on embarking on this most exciting and challenging field of eye surgery.

J. J. KANSKI