

early 1970s. With commendable brevity yet great attention to the practical issues Dr Charles outlines his own views and practices, with deliberately scant attention to consensus opinion, if such there can be in this rapidly developing field. Most of the problems likely to confront the 'closed microsurgeon' both in the anterior and posterior segments are detailed. I was somewhat surprised that some of the special problems of non-diabetic vasoproliferative disorders (other than retrolental fibroplasia) were not considered, and the section on corneoscleral lacerations was remarkable for the lack of mention of rhegmatogenous components at the ora, which frequently dominate the surgical problem. Similarly, Dr Charles may be unique in achieving removal of epimacular 'pucker' membranes without damage (if not extensive removal) of the underlying basal lamina.

My major criticism of this work, however, lies in its literary style, as exemplified by the opening quotation. Parts of the book demand a degree of concentration at times exceeding that required to perform some of the complicated intraocular manoeuvres which are described. On occasion I found myself reading and rereading passages in an attempt to discover the underlying message, the logic steps between adjacent sentences, or the context of a doubtful remark. Fortunately there are a multitude of excellent diagrams such that one can ultimately forgive the deficiencies in editorial scrutiny of the text.

Criticisms apart, this book is likely to prove the last word in the field of mechanically activated vitreous surgery prior to the laser era which is almost upon us. Despite the 'building block' approach to decision making, it is difficult to conceive of it as a primer in closed microsurgery, since there is a tendency to assume considerable knowledge of engineering and biological principles, and there are no clinical photographs to relate to. Nevertheless, the book is essential reading for ophthalmologists with more than a passing interest in this subject, and will be the 'little red book' of those of us who count ourselves among Dr Charles's disciples.

DAVID MCLEOD

Practical Techniques in Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery. By BYRON C. SMITH and FRANK A. NESI. Pp. 227. £36.00. Mosby: London. 1981.

This book was written, as the preface states, to update the technical details of a limited number of surgical procedures which the authors frequently use. It achieves this aim. The procedures described are beautifully and very clearly illustrated. The text is kept to a minimum. It is succinct, precise, and easy to follow. Full details are given, including anaesthesia, what sutures to use, how to insert them, and what dressings are favoured.

Very little attempt is made to describe the indications for alternative procedures. If the reader does not have a knowledge of ophthalmic plastic surgery he will find it difficult to assess which procedure to choose for any particular patient. For instance, the chapter on ectropion describes only the Byron Smith modification of the Kuhnt-Zymanowski procedure and the Lazy-T operation. Mention is made that an ectropion may be cicatricial or non-cicatricial, but no further specific details are given. In the chapter on lid repair there is no discussion of the difference

between a lid margin defect and a more extensive defect. The ptosis chapter does not relate the type of surgery very clearly to the levator function. It would be a pity if the reader thought that a free tarsal graft or a tarsal transfer was the only way of lengthening the lower lid retractors or that a dermis-fat graft was the only suitable orbital implant. Nor is mention made of how to manage complications which might arise, although there is some discussion of how to avoid them.

The book tries to cover the whole field of ophthalmic plastic surgery and includes operations on the eyelids, conjunctiva, lacrimal apparatus, orbital tumours, sockets, and the repair of orbital fractures. With such a wide field it is inevitable that some of the sections are superficial, and it is a pity that no references or indications for further reading are given. Provided the reader understands these limitations he will find many excellent procedures very well described and illustrated in this book. Byron Smith has initiated and modified a large number of ophthalmic plastic operations, and it is valuable to have them collected in one book with details of how he recommends that they should be performed.

J. R. O. COLLIN

Der Gesichtssinn: Neuro-physiologische Grundlagen. By WOLFGANG RÜDIGER. Pp. 100. M 14.60. Georg Thieme Leipzig: West Berlin. 1982.

Many of the recent advances in the neurophysiology of the visual system are included in this excellent study of the retina and its central connections. The sensory and motor components of visual function are discussed from their physiological aspects with reference to human and animal studies. Pathological conditions are mentioned only briefly, for this is basically a book for the neurophysiologist rather than the clinical ophthalmologist. The numerous diagrams are instructive and the bibliography is comprehensive and contemporary.

T. J. FFYTCHÉ

Manual of Retinal and Choroidal Dystrophies. By MICHAEL A. BLOOME and CHARLES A. GARCIA. Pp. 129. £12.40. Appleton-Century-Crofts: New York. 1982.

This short manual on retinal and choroidal dystrophies is clearly written, well organised, and despite its modest size contains a remarkable amount of up-to-date information. An introductory chapter discusses terminology, including definitions of macular anatomy, and provides a rationale for classifying the retinal and choroidal dystrophies in a topographical manner. A further chapter is devoted to the basic diagnostic tests of retinal function including colour vision, dark adaptation, electro-retinography, electro-oculography, visually evoked responses, and contrast sensitivity.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the various retinal and choroidal dystrophies described in anatomical sequence. The chapters include the vitreoretinal and ganglion cell dystrophies, the rod and rod-cone and cone and cone-rod dystrophies, and retinal pigment epithelial dystrophies. The 2 final chapters relate to disorders of Bruch's membrane and the choroidal dystrophies. The