BOOK REVIEWS

Toxoplasmosis and its Ocular Manifestations. (La toxoplasmosis et ses manifestations oculaires).

This book presents a good review of previous work on all aspects of toxoplasmosis. It deals with the morphology, pathogenicity, and animal hosts of the Toxoplasma organism and the role of this organism in human disease. The systemic and ocular manifestations of congenital and acquired toxoplasmosis are described and numerous cases reported and illustrated by fundus photographs. The epidemiology, diagnosis, laboratory investigations, and treatment are fully discussed. The extensive bibliography contains over 3,000 references.


This is a clearly-written account of the normal process of ageing as it affects the structure and function of the human eye. It draws widely on the published work in this field and on the author’s own experience.

A survey of the visible effects of ageing on the eye as a whole precedes a more detailed description of the process of ageing as it affects the cornea, the sclera and intra-ocular pressure, the uveal tract, the lens, refraction and presbyopia, and the nervous elements of the eye. This is followed by three chapters dealing with different aspects of the senescence of visual function, namely the various visual thresholds, the spatial and temporal resolution of the eye, and its spectral sensitivity and colour vision. A final chapter contains suggestions for suitable lighting to ameliorate some of the visual handicaps of age. There is an extensive bibliography.

The book is well illustrated and readable. In bringing together a wealth of previously disconnected facts in relation to ageing, it presents a well-integrated picture of ocular senescence.

The author is perhaps more at home when describing the changes in visual physiology than in the more clinical aspects of the subject, but the practising ophthalmologist, the physiologist, and many others interested in the eye and the process of ageing will undoubtedly find much to interest them in the pages of a book which, the author claims, was written for himself.


The 14th supplementary “Cahier” contains chapters on refraction and refractive anomalies and their correction by R. Campinchi; the iris and ciliary body, methods of examination, and the aetiology of iridocyclitis by J. François; tuberculosis of the uveal tract by L. Calmettes and F. Déodati; the lens (methods of examination and congenital anomalies) by A. Brini; and ocular anomalies in diseases affecting the bones by P. Maroteaux and M. Lamy. Each chapter is clear and concise and brings the subject up to date with recent advances and investigations.


A comprehensive bibliography of great value to all those interested in the subject.


This is a study of the histology and functional anatomy of the retinal ganglion cell layer in man, the chimpanzee, and the macaque. It begins with a review of the histology as shown by metallic, methylene blue, and chromatic stains. The emphasis throughout is on topographical distribution of the ganglion cells, and these are also experiments wherein lesions were placed in the macaque to demonstrate retrograde retinal degeneration resulting from axon section and destruction of the suprageniculate portions of the visual system. The book concludes by reporting reconstruction
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studies of human retinæ from cases with lesions in both the pregeniculate postgeniculate portions of the visual tract. Correlations are attempted between form and function by superimposing anatomical plots of ganglion cell population upon isopters recorded at visual field examination.

The greater part of the book is detailed and erudite and offers an unusual interpretation of retinal ganglion cell function. There are, however, inaccuracies; Fig. 13 is described as "astrocyte processes in the ganglion cell layer of the human retina", whereas it in fact shows the lateral extensions which arise from the main radial fibre trunks.

One of the more interesting conclusions of this lengthy study is that severe loss of ganglion cells can occur without reduction of visual acuity.


This small volume contains a summary of a post-graduate course given recently at the University of California School of Medicine in San Francisco on ocular pharmacology and therapeutics. With the addition of two guest speakers—Leopold of Philadelphia and Welch of New Haven—the thirteen lecturers were members of the staff of the University Faculty. Only four therapeutic problems were selected for detailed discussion: uveitis, ocular infections (which somewhat surprisingly include keratitis sicca), diabetes, and the use of antimetabolite drugs in viral infections. All the discussions are interesting and informative. The complex problem of the treatment of uveitis is considered to remain a challenge to the ingenuity of the physician, and much reliance has still to be placed on the blanketing influence of the steroids. Superficial ocular infections offer less intractable problems. The value of new drugs in diabetes (Tolbutamide, Chlorpropamide) is discussed as well as the effect of surgical or radiational destruction of the hypophysis. The most interesting section is on the use of antimetabolite drugs (IDU and its analogues) in viral infections, particularly herpes; here results are encouraging but by no means definitive.


A book on ocular pathology is always welcome if only to emphasize that this is a subject in its own right and is daily growing in importance and interest. This book is short and written largely in the form of a synopsis of the lectures given by the author for the Diploma of Ophthalmology in Melbourne University and the F.R.A.C.S. Most of ophthalmic pathology is covered, some of it somewhat superficially (such as glaucoma), some of it well (such as uveitis), and some of it excellently (as neoplasms and lens-induced reactions). The illustrations are numerous and of a high order. It is to be hoped that, when a second edition appears (and we hope it will), it will be fuller and less obviously intended for the post-graduate student undertaking his final emergency study before facing his examiners and more for the fascination of the subject itself.


This symposium on infections of the conjunctiva and cornea, held in New Orleans in 1962 and revised for publication, provides interesting reading, although it is essentially a summation of present knowledge with no dramatic innovations in clinical diagnosis and treatment. The eighteen papers cover all aspects of the subject—laboratory methods of diagnosis, the characteristics of the various infective agents, the clinical features of the different types of conjunctivitis and corneal ulcers, and the prevention of ocular infections in ophthalmic practice and surgery. The field covered is large; but the discussion is light and in very general terms. The thorny question, for example, of the treatment of herpes is contained within a few lines; the place of IDU therein is "being evaluated". The volume, however is comprehensive and gives a sound summary of present views on a class of ophthalmic disease which is commonly encountered and frequently provides difficult and baffling problems in its management.