BOOK REVIEWS


A fourth volume of the series of "Modern Trends in Ophthalmology" has appeared under Sorsby's editorship. The first part on some newer clinical procedures starts well with a chapter on fluorescence retinal photography by Dollery of Hammersmith Hospital, who places great stress on the all-important details of technique; undoubtedly this method of examination has done much to increase our knowledge of vascular retinal disease. There follows a chapter on ultrasonography wherein the clinical diagnostic value is discussed by Baum of New York and its use in measuring the optic components of the globe by Sorsby. Curiously, in the same part, are included a chapter on the most recent views of the genetic prognosis of retinoblastoma by Vogel of Heidelberg, and another on the carrier state in hereditary ophthalmic diseases by Sorsby. In the second part some newer clinical entities are discussed—unusual clinical forms of glaucoma by Sugar of Detroit, recent developments in infective diseases of the retina and choroid by O'Connor and Hogan of San Francisco, which include toxoplasmosis, histoplasmosis, and cytomegalic inclusion disease; and Sorsby has again contributed a chapter on hereditary affections of the fundus. The third part, discussing pathology and diagnosis, includes a chapter on ocular antibodies in endogenous ocular inflammations by Wittmer of Zürich, nutritional disorders by McLaren of Beirut, vascular retinopathies by Leishman of Glasgow, and drug-induced, experimental, and spontaneous retinal degeneration by Sorsby. The final part discusses modern techniques in surgery, including the surgery of cataract by Fasanella of Yale, retinal detachment by Schepens and Freeman of Boston, squint by Schlossman of New York, and keratoplasty by Trevor-Roper of London. The book provides interesting and useful reading as, indeed, is to be expected from the distinguished galaxy of contributors from all over the world that the editor has collected.


It may seem that the ophthalmic literature is already overburdened with papers and books on cataract surgery, but a critical survey of the state of affairs at any particular time cannot fail to be of value, especially when a group of experienced and prominent ophthalmologists in the field is collected together to provide the material.

In a space of a little over 300 pages the diagnosis of leucocoria, the pre-operative, operative, and post-operative management of congenital, adult, and complicated cataracts, and the complications of cataract surgery are given careful and authoritative consideration.

It is not necessary to enlarge upon any one aspect of cataract surgery in reviewing a book of such comprehensive scope, which is a tribute to the skill with which the material of the symposium has been assembled.

After a full discussion of the subject, the questions and answers in the round-table discussion complete the book. Here, many controversial points are raised and the replies are equally controversial and often dogmatic. The unanimous rejection by the panel of the routine use of pre-operative conjunctival cultures is but one example.

This book is recommended to all ophthalmic surgeons who have an active interest in cataract surgery and there must be few who have not.


During recent years diabetic retinopathy has excited an unusual amount of interest and there is no doubt that the techniques which have recently been evolved in studying the retinal blood vessels both in health and disease have done more to increase our knowledge during the last decade than
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had been achieved in the last 50 years. A symposium on this most important condition is therefore valuable and in this volume the opinions of 25 of the most widely known experts are detailed and discussed. Starting suitably with the Proctor Lecture of Norman Ashton, every aspect of diabetic retinopathy receives attention, including its vascular pathology and its treatment both by medical means and through the pituitary by heavy-particle radiation, section of its stalk, or its destruction by cryosurgery. The symposium was sponsored by the University of California, for here as elsewhere in the world diabetic retinopathy is rapidly becoming a major cause of blindness, particularly in young adults; it would be difficult to find a more authoritative assessment of present thought than in this volume.


This book is difficult to read; but the reading of it is well worth while. Its purpose is to explore the nature of visual perceptions by an analysis of the various disturbing phenomena which result if space is disoriented and distorted and by tracing the gradual rectification which usually occurs owing to the adapting effect of the underlying influence of memory-traces. Such studies are not new; they started with von Helmholtz, who in 1866 observed the effect of wearing a wedge-prism displacing objects to one side, and the classical experiment of George Stratton who, between 1896 and 1899, studied the effects of wearing inverting prisms. Recently these problems have excited much interest, including not only the effects of the optical displacement of images but also their distortion by alterations in size and form and their disorientation from other proprioceptive correlates. The author makes a good case for his fundamental thesis, that an artificially altered system of coordinates in the neural substrate can be corrected by memories of the normal spatial properties of objects.


The persistent multiplication of new drugs, some of them of considerable potency, has given rise not only in medicine but also in the lay public to a fear of their possible side-effects, particularly as some of these may not be observable in experimental animals or for a considerable period in man. To these complications the retina is by no means immune, with consequences which may be serious and permanent. This survey of our knowledge of drug-induced retinopathies is therefore of considerable interest and in its pages will be found a very full discussion on the toxicological effects of such drugs as the phenothiazine derivatives, sodium iodate, chloramphenicol, and chloroquine when they are used in general medicine. The book is authoritative and the bibliography full.


The third edition of this work has been revised and enlarged with special reference to the ophthalmic manifestations of systemic disease; it remains a concise and detailed source of information remarkable in a book of this size.

However, there are some errors and inaccuracies. The table of pupillary signs is very misleading—Adie’s pupil certainly may react to light, enophthalmos is not a feature of Horner’s syndrome in man, and Wernicke’s hemianopic pupil is not a sign on which any great reliance can be placed.

In the section on uveitis undue attention is paid to syphilitic and tuberculous iritis and insufficient to ankylosing spondylitis and sarcoidosis. Little mention is made of the role of modern drugs in causing optic atrophy and there is scant evidence that diabetes or “rheumatic diathesis” are causes of optic neuritis.

In the chapter on glaucoma it is advised that 1 per cent. DFP drops can be used in acute closed-angle cases—these would congest the eye still further. Also carbonic anhydrase inhibitors should take precedence over the use of glycerol in such cases. No mention is made of the use of urea or
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mannitol. The table summarizing glaucoma still suggests that congestive attacks occur in open-angle glaucoma and that these can be cured by broad iridectomy! Finally, the features of buphthalmos are not altogether in keeping with modern views.

In a synopsis the use of scattered isolated references is dangerous, particularly when discussing such controversial matters as the isolation of a virus in Behçet’s disease, the use of lasers, and the role of digoxin and cryotherapy in glaucoma.

However, most of these criticisms concern detailed ophthalmic practice and will have little relevance to the students who will enthusiastically welcome this new edition.


Some knowledge of the geographical incidence of disease is obviously becoming more important with the increasing facility of travel and the resultant shrinkage of the world. However, beyond this utilitarian aspect, an analysis of the ecological, climatic, anthropological, nutritional, and cultural background, while fascinating in its own right, may well provide invaluable clues to the causation of disease and, in closed communities, to its possible genetic background. This applies to all diseases, not only those in our own specialty and, with the whole world being opened up and backward communities “civilized”, it is important that this knowledge should be garnered before too dull a uniformity of world economic and social conditions is reached.

Ida Mann is warmly to be congratulated on this work, which is a pioneer in this field. She herself has travelled extensively in the Australasian Continent and Islands and this book gives the results of her researches, together with information from the literature and from personal correspondence covering literally the whole of the rest of the world. Tables showing the incidence of ocular disease and the major causes of blindness are given in large numbers for places ranging from the small closed communities of the New Guinea Highlands to the countries of the Western world. The influence of the background generally in relation to the incidence and severity of disease-processes is analysed; trachoma, as might be expected, runs like a thread throughout and the influence of dirt and over-crowding and the effect of exposure to the outside world of previously isolated enclaves are strikingly brought out. Another curious feature, for example, is the very low incidence, in spite of perforating trauma, of sympathetic ophthalmitis in the areas which Ida Mann herself surveyed.

Apart from its scientific content, valuable enough in itself, the book is delightfully written with vignettes of the manners, customs, and mode of life of the communities and countries surveyed, which are as fascinating as, and probably much more truthful than, any travel agent’s brochure and remind one nostalgically of tales of travel read in youth. It is even more fascinating, for neither in travel agents’ blurbs nor in the stories of the most intrepid travellers is one likely to learn that absence of eyebrows and eyelashes in an adolescent living in the Marshall Bennett Islands is not due to some mysterious infection or genetic influence; it is in fact a form of erotomania, the hirsute appendages being bitten off during amorous dalliance!

The book is beautifully produced and illustrated. On all counts it should find a place in every ophthalmologist’s library.


This short monograph deals with the hormones associated with this obscure condition, frequently known as endocrine exophthalmos, its clinical diagnosis and therapy. The initial part discusses the physiology of the thyrotropic hormones, the long-acting thyroid stimulators, the hormones associated with the hypophysis, and the corticosteroids, and describes the attempts which have been made to produce exophthalmos experimentally. From the clinical point of view subsequent
sections of the volume are concerned with difficulties in diagnosis, pathology, and treatment by
the administration of hormonal extracts or radioactive iodine. The subject is comprehensively
discussed with a considerable bibliography.

Books), London. (68s.)

The year-books within the various fields of medicine have been published annually since 1900
to make available "in detailed abstract form the working essence of the cream of recent ... 
literature". Though we may be a little unfamiliar with the nature of the working essence of cream,
this year book, like its predecessors, is undoubtedly an excellent and most useful publication.
Selected detailed abstracts in the reviewer’s opinion are of much greater use to the practising
ophthalmologists than a complete and uncritical collection of very brief abstracts of the entire
literature. The Editor’s comments add a sense of proportion and humour to this enjoyable book.

NOTES

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

Paris, 1967

The Council met under the presidency of Prof. J. Charamis. Prof. Müller announced that
more than 3,200 effective and associated members had attended the Congress in Munich. After a
preliminary report from Prof. Puig Solanes, President of the next International Congress of
Ophthalmology which is to be held in Mexico, the Council decided that the official languages of
the Congress would be English, French, and Spanish. The membership fee will be U.S. $45 (if
paid one year in advance), otherwise U.S. $60. The pathology of the occipital lobe and the embryo-
pathies have been chosen as subjects of the main reports. Kubik (Canada), Dubois-Poulsen
(France), and Velasco Suarez (Mexico) have been designated as speakers on the former.
The “Classification of Eye Diseases” will be published in the near future.
The Ophthalmological Societies of Iraq, Bolivia, and Thailand have been accepted as members
of the International Federation of Ophthalmological Societies.

PROF. J. FRANÇOIS,
Secretary of the International
Council of Ophthalmology.

OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Annual Congress, 1967

The 87th Annual Congress of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom was held
at the Royal College of Physicians of London from April 19 to 21, 1967, under the presidency of
Sir Tudor Thomas. Over 350 members and guests were present, including many distinguished
foreign visitors.
The meeting opened with the Presidential Address entitled “Advancing Knowledge”. Sir
Tudor recalled the pattern of the rapid changes in ophthalmic knowledge over recent decades
and the factors that had influenced them. He spoke of the early forays into corneal surgery, and
his own pioneer work between the wars, with an engaging diversion on the discovery of sight
following corneal grafting in one of his patients who had been born totally blind.
The first major discussion, on “Microsurgery”, was opened by Mr. M. J. Roper-Hall, who
reviewed the development of microscopes in ophthalmic surgery and the various predictable and
unpredictable advantages these had brought. As a result, new operations had been introduced
which promised more specific and reliable relief of the glaucomatous eye, while further new opera-
tions were to be anticipated. Prof. Richard Troutman described the production of binocular