200 pages or so comprise the general index arranged by Miss Rosamund E. Soley. It adds to the usefulness of the *System*, making it possible to track down information which may be dispersed in several volumes. It also gives a bird's eye view of the 18 volumes which have preceded it, and although Sir Stewart has written 'The End' to his immense task it seems likely from his preface that he may make some plans to see that his great labour does not wither with time but is continued in some form into the future.

STEPHEN MILLER

Adenine Arabinoside: An Antiviral Agent. By D. PAVAN-LANGSON, R. A. BUCHANAN, and C. A. ALFORD. 1975. Pp. 425, figs., tables, refs. North-Holland, Amsterdam (\$25.95)

A symposium was held in San Francisco on 16-17 September 1974 to discuss the result of studies on antiviral activity of adenine arabinoside (ara-A). This book provides an authoritative summary of the information presented in that meeting.

The book is divided into 3 sections—preclinical, parenteral, and ophthalmic. The preclinical section presents papers describing the result of work on the antiviral activity of ara-A in cell cultures and in animals, and on the safety of the drug for parenteral and topical use. The parenteral section describes studies, still under way, to establish the effectiveness of ara-A in systemic and life-threatening viral infections. The ophthalmic section presents the results of extensive studies on the intraocular penetration of ara-A and of its efficacy against simple and complicated herpetic keratitis in comparison with idoxuridine and trifluorothymidine. The studies indicate that a new compound ara-A is as effective as IDU in treating herpetic keratitis, and gives evidence of the activity of this drug in a wide variety of other DNA virus-induced diseases.

This book is highly recommended to all ophthalmologists.

S. DAROUGAR

Malignant Melanoma—Clinical and Histological Diagnosis. By VINCENT J. MCGOVERN. 1976. Pp. 178, 123 figs., tables, refs. John Wiley, New York (£16.00)

The author is clearly an expert in this particular field of pathology. His book is very readable and is profusely illustrated by both clinical and pathological photographs, but its title is somewhat misleading, because the author has included descriptions of benign melanotic tumours of the skin.

The book is composed of 12 chapters which deal in turn with pigmented naevi, their malignant potential, melanoma, spontaneous regression in these tumours, multiple primary cutaneous melanomata, their metastases, their prognostic features, their diagnosis by frozen section, the doubtful cases, the surgical approach, ocular melanoma, and problems concerning melanotic tumours in children. The problems of diagnosis of pigmented tumours are fully discussed.

There is an interesting account of Hutchinson's melanotic freckle, a lesion which may be difficult to differentiate from the well-known superficial spreading

type of melanoma. The most important feature that distinguishes the two lesions is the presence of advanced solar degeneration of the skin in the former. Apart from the rare malignant blue naevus, the author recognises 3 main histogenetic patterns of development regardless of the presence or absence of a pre-existing naevus. He divides melanomas into 3 groups: invasive melanoma, with adjacent intraepidermal component of Hutchinson's melanotic freckle; invasive melanoma, with adjacent intraepidermal component of superficial spreading type; and invasive melanoma, without an intraepidermal component. The importance of recognising these 3 categories lies in the fact that each has a different prognosis, being worse when there is no evidence of an intraepithelial component. The author's classification is based on the work of Clark (1967), an international meeting of pathologists (1972), and on his own experience. In contrast to his classification of skin melanomata a recent meeting of pathologists at the World Health Organisation in Geneva reclassified tumours of the eye and its adnexa and divided melanomata of the skin of the eyelid into 4 recognisable histological types: melanoma arising in junctional or compound naevi, melanoma arising in blue naevi or cellular blue naevi, melanoma arising in intraepithelial melanosis, and melanoma of indeterminate nature.

The author has also discussed the relation between the prognosis of melanomata of the skin and the number of mitotic figures, the depth of tumour invasion, and the presence of a polypoidal structure. The prognosis is worse with increasing mitosis, depth of invasion, and when there is a polypoid pattern. On the other hand the presence of a continuous band of lymphocytes beneath the melanoma is usually an indication of spontaneous regression.

There is a short chapter on ocular melanomas, but it is impossible to cover this field adequately in a few pages. Some of the illustrations of choroidal melanomata are poor, and his assertion that the usual treatment of choice for conjunctival melanomata should be excision of the orbit will be severely criticised by ophthalmic surgeons who reserve this form of treatment for only a small percentage of cases, including those in which the melanoma has recurred and has invaded the orbit.

The author is to be congratulated on writing such an excellent treatise on melanotic tumours, and this book is highly recommended to all histopathologists.

GWYN MORGAN

The Ophthalmic Assistant—Fundamentals and Clinical Practice. 3rd edn. Edited by H. A. SKIN and B. J. SLATT. 1976. Pp. 594, figs., tables. Mosby, St. Louis (London, Henry Kimpton) (£15.45)

The ophthalmic assistant, for whom this book is written, is the clinic or consulting room assistant who may have had no formal training but who needs a knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and optics as well as practical information on clinical methods, eye diseases, and medical and surgical treatment.

There are chapters on running the appointments office, spectacles, minor surgery, and hospital practice.

Three very informative chapters on contact lenses emphasise the growing importance of these in practice. Glaucoma, tonometry, tonography, and visual-field testing are described. There are an atlas of eye diseases, a glossary of terms, and tables of drugs. Practical advice on blind patients and their problems will be valuable to those meeting them for the first time. Backwardness in reading in children and the difficulties in the management of these disabilities are discussed fully.

The running of an eye clinic increasingly depends on ancillary staff, and this textbook provides for them a very useful guide. For those wanting to test themselves there is a list of questions after each chapter. G. B. COLLYER

The Visual Fields. A Text-book and Atlas of Clinical Perimetry. 4th edn. By D. O. HARRINGTON. 1976. Pp. 413, figs., refs. Mosby, St. Louis (London, Henry Kimpton) (£20.30)

In the introduction to the first edition the author quotes the old cliché that 'one picture is worth ten thousand words', and this led him to design the book as an atlas, a concept which is underscored by the retention of the word 'Atlas' in the title. As an excellently illustrated atlas Dr Harrington has undoubtedly achieved his objective.

In his preface to the fourth edition he points out that new complex instruments and techniques have lengthened the time requirements of perimetric examination, which has resulted in the delegation of much field examination to trained paramedical technicians. But he stresses that this should not relieve the ophthalmologist of the responsibility of carefully supervising such technicians and observing the response of the patient. 'When such an important subjective psychophysical test is not conducted by the physician it loses much of its diagnostic value' . . . and 'thus there is no real substitute for the visual field examination by the ophthalmologist himself'. This is a view that Traquair would certainly have endorsed.

The only criticism of this excellent atlas of clinical perimetry is that the reading as well as the distant visual acuity is not recorded on many of the charts. A superbly illustrated guide to the art of perimetry, this book well deserves the popularity it has achieved. G. I. SCOTT

Oculoplastic Surgery and Trauma. Edited by Pierre Guibor. 1976. Pp. 234, figs., tables, refs. Stratton Intercontinental, New York (\$17.95)

This attractively presented volume contains the selected papers and round-table discussions of the annual meeting

of the American Society of Contemporary Ophthalmology.

The first 4 chapters are devoted to the subject of ptosis, and the contents can be summarised in the words of one of the contributors, 'everyone who describes the anatomy of the levator seems to give a slightly different description . . .' There must surely be only one true description of anatomy, which regrettably does not appear in the chapters on the subject. Each contributor's approach to the surgery of ptosis is based on his own concept of the anatomy and pathology and does not clarify the existing confusion.

There follow several chapters on trauma of the orbital region, all of which are personal accounts of cases treated. It would have been better if the chapters on 'Epiphora following cosmetic surgery' and 'Complications of dacryocystorhinostomy' followed consecutively. There is a lesson for some in the former chapter although the 'retro-ocular' and 'superclavicular' areas sounded strange.

The remaining presentations deal with lid tumours and their repair, entropion, the use of scleral grafts, fornix reconstruction, and the management of recurrent pterygia.

Without wishing to be unkind it must be said that unless illustrations speak for themselves they are better not included; the pity is that photography of poor quality detracts from an otherwise well produced volume.

The final round-table discussion makes interesting reading, particularly when dogmatism is challenged by reason. A. WERB

Vitamin A Deficiency and Xerophthalmia. WHO Technical Report Series No. 590. 1976. Pp. 88, figs. (4 in colour), tables. WHO, Geneva (Swfr8)

This valuable publication in paperback is the report of a joint WHO/USALD meeting, and would appear to cover all aspects of the problem. The introduction deals with definitions, significance, and prevalence. The second section covers the chemistry, sources, and metabolism of vitamin A, and this is followed by methods of assessment, ecology, a detailed account of prevalence, and treatment. Prevention is adequately covered. Valuable recommendations for research are added. There is a list of 86 references.

While this book would not have a great practical appeal to those practising in highly developed areas, it will be of inestimable value to those having to deal with the problem where it is rife. It is available at HM Stationery Office in London and many other cities in the United Kingdom. F. W. LAW