BOOK REVIEW


This book has been written primarily for dispensing opticians but it contains much to interest the ophthalmic surgeon. The art of ophthalmic dispensing is defined as "the translation of the formula into appropriate spectacle lenses to provide maximum ocular efficiency", and dispensers are warned against expressing any opinion about a patient's vision or eye health and are advised not to show surprise or dismay at a strong or complicated prescription.

"Ophthalmic Dispensing" contains numerous practical hints which are of use to ophthalmologists, of which the following are examples: after cataract extraction, the optical and visual axes are nearly coincident and allowance for this virtual abolition of the angle gamma has to be made in centring the glasses; in unilateral aphakia, although the difference in size of the images varies from 20 to 35 per cent. according to the previous ametropia of the affected eye, fusion can be obtained in selected cases by the use of a special lens to diminish the size of image in the aphakic eye. In the chapter dealing with ophthalmic lenses, a useful and comprehensive account is given of the various forms of bifocals and trifocals, and this is amplified in a later chapter "Vocational Lenses" dealing with those required for special purposes, e.g., for a librarian who must be able to see the titles of books on shelves above eye level. The useful suggestion is made of having trial lenses with temporary cemented segments before deciding on the final form. Provisional lenses are also advocated for cataract cases during the settling-down period, though the author is incorrect in regarding as unique the services of one firm which provides cylinders as well as spheres, since these have been available in Great Britain for many years.

As would be expected in a book of this character, a fair amount of space is given to the theoretical side of the subject. Marginal astigmatism, aniseikonia, and the control of image size in anisometropia are some of the subjects which receive consideration. Reading these chapters one makes one realize the difficulties with which opticians have had to contend and the immense amount of work whereby these have been overcome. That the difficulties in lens-making are not only theoretical, is shown by the statement that out of a 600-lb. melt of optical glass, over 90 per cent. is lost in the manufacture of regular single-vision lenses and 98 per cent. in the manufacture of one-piece bifocals, information which may often be useful in countering patients' complaints about the cost of lenses. Advice is also given on dealing with complaints of discomfort in wearing new glasses and on the importance of correct centring. The subject of reflections in spectacle-lens surfaces receives adequate notice, an account being given of how these are produced and of how to deal with them. Many other points are dealt with in this interesting book, but the above will give some idea of its scope; there appears, however, to be no reference to recumbent spectacles or to reading additions in slip-in, or grab fronts, for those who do not wish to wear bifocals.

The author is to be congratulated on the production of a volume which will give ophthalmologists much necessary information which is not available in their ordinary text-books.