BOOK REVIEWS

illustrations of some important lesions, such as meningioma of the optic nerve; the section on myeloma is somewhat inadequate, and solitary plasmacytoma is not mentioned. The difficulty in diagnosing iris biopsies in cases of suspected malignancy should have been discussed, and benign lymphomata of the conjunctiva might, perhaps, have received more than a passing reference. On p. 237, Fig. 115C should read 115B.

These, however, are very minor points, for the book is undoubtedly excellent and will long remain the standard work on the subject. Despite its high cost no consultant oculist or comprehensive medical library should be without it. The author is to be congratulated on a fine contribution to ophthalmic literature.


This is the most recent addition to a series of notable books upon ophthalmological subjects published under the auspices of the Société française d'Ophtalmologie. Professor Guy Offret is also part-author of a former volume in the series on corneal grafts and grafting.

In his introduction Professor Offret states that, despite progress in diagnostic and explorative techniques, the diagnosis of orbital tumours remains one of the most difficult in the realm of ophthalmology and his aim in preparing the present work has been to resolve some of this difficulty and obscurity by presenting as a cogent whole, the symptomatology, diagnosis, histopathology, and treatment of primary orbital tumours. The resulting volume has been carefully planned and executed; the author has drawn upon the vast literature and upon his own wide experience to produce a balanced and integrated clinical and pathological study in which outworn and speculative ideas have been abandoned and adequate space devoted to detailed histopathological description.

The preliminary chapters are devoted to a systematic account of the symptoms and signs of orbital tumours. The value of radiography in diagnosis is emphasized and the advantages of tomography, in eliminating the false shadows which make plain radiographs of the orbit and nasal sinuses difficult and deceptive, are amply illustrated in a manner intelligible even to the uninitiated. The injection of air as a contrast medium into the orbital tissues and into Tenon's capsule is described and illustrated, and reference is made to cerebral angiography as an occasional means of revealing tumours not otherwise discernible. On the whole the author favours biopsy, believing that with careful technique the diagnostic advantage outweighs the danger of dissemination.

The statistical study which occupies Chapter III culminates in an impressive analysis of 676 surgically and histologically verified tumours mostly from French and American sources. It is doubtful if such a large series, carefully analysed, exists anywhere else in the literature.

Each of the subsequent sections is devoted to tumours arising from a particular tissue—osseous, vascular, neural, etc. This is convenient enough for the most part, but leads to some difficulties with myeloid tumours and reticulosarcomata. The subject matter is explored with meticulous care and each section enriched with detailed case histories. The author employs the term tumour in a wide sense to include almost all space-occupying lesions other that those of inflammatory origin. The use of the designation 'peripheral glioma' for Schwannoma and neurilemmoma will induce in pathologists, at least, a sense of frustration, but it is the logical outcome of the view, not universally acceptable, that Schwann cells and the arachnoid endothelial cells are of neuroectodermal origin.

The 290 figures are mostly photomicrographs of good quality, some of which, however, have suffered a loss of detail in reproduction: it is perhaps a pity that the magnification is not stated. The bibliography contains over 1,000 references, and it is
significant of the growing interest in orbital tumours that the majority are to works published since 1930. It is to be regretted that an index was not thought necessary.

Finally, the fact that the text is in French need deter no one, for the author's style is lucid and his astringent didacticism brings his wide and detailed knowledge into sharp focus.


The appearance of yet another book on ophthalmology to provide, in the words of the preface, for the needs of the undergraduate student and the general practitioner, calls, we feel, for some justification, in view of the large numbers of excellent works already available in the English language to meet such a demand. We have searched this work in vain for any features upon which such a plea of justification could be based. The book, we feel, is completely lacking in balance. It is emphasized in the preface that the basic fundamentals of diagnosis and therapy are encompassed in the physiology of vision, this appears to be muddled thinking, and we cannot but think that if part of the space devoted to discussions on the visual pigments, electro-retinography, and the like, had been devoted to a consideration of the basic physiology of the eye itself and of its components, the book would be of greater value to those for whom it is designed.

The same defects mar those sections devoted to clinical ophthalmology, where the aim seems to have been to mention as many clinical disease entities as possible, a mode of presentation which, in a work of this size, must preclude anything more than a superficial, and often tabulated, summary of the salient features of each, and which, while useful to the erudite student, has little value for the beginner.

The general standard of accuracy is unfortunately not of a high level. Thus, for example, on p. 85 the editors of the first series of "Modern Trends in Ophthalmology" appear under the pseudonyms Riley and Sarsby, on p. 173 we read of the glands of Zeiss, on p. 339 of Coat's disease, on p. 239 that muscae volitantes are shadows cast on the retina by corpuscles coursing through the retinal blood vessels, on p. 341 that it is the passage of vitreous through a hole in the retina which leads to the formation of a detachment, on p. 352 that Leber's disease occurs almost exclusively in males, having been transmitted through females in whom the disease was not manifest, and on p. 389 that, while Duane's syndrome comprises many aberrations of ocular motility, retraction of the globe does not apparently occur in any circumstances.

The illustrations, a very large number of which has been taken from standard textbooks and journals and are in half-tone, are good and accurately legended.