BOOK REVIEW


Impressed by what he considers to be very poor progress towards the solution of the problem of squint during the past 50 years, and stimulated by the lack of unanimity in the views of the origin and cause of the condition expressed at the Strabismus Symposium held in Holland in December, 1943, Dr. Keiner has sought out the many gaps in our knowledge of the subject, and by intensive research during the past few years has attempted to understand and explain the difficulties encountered by the many workers in this field. The results of his efforts are now reported, and it is obvious from a perusal of the text—in which the clinical and statistical study of nearly a thousand cases is summarized—that he has undertaken his task with great determination.

To provide a background for his own theories, the author begins with a critical review of the hypotheses of a number of other observers, including von Graefe, Worth, Duane, and van der Hoeve. The reflex theory of Zeeman is considered in much greater detail, as it is upon this foundation stone that Keiner builds up his proposition.

The major part of the book is devoted to an investigation of the many factors, internal and external, which may influence the onset of squint. The author has observed that in squinting infants there is an upset of the opto-motor reflexes, and he suggests that this disturbance may be due to delayed myelination, localized especially in the occipital lobe, and possibly influenced by endocrine factors. As evidence he refers to the work of Beauvieux (1926), who described the condition of “optic pseudo-atrophy of the new-born”. The studies of the factors involved in the development of early squint include retinography and a separate examination of the responses of the nasal and temporal halves of the retinae respectively to stimulation. A detailed account is given of the methods used in carrying out these observations, and a critical assessment of the clinical records is presented.

The author sets out his own views and hypotheses under the two headings of physiological and pathological features. Here, as we might expect from the elusiveness of real data in the study of anatomical and functional factors in the causation of squint, we find ourselves in the realm of conjecture, but we are left in no doubt regarding Keiner’s own views. It must be with considerable optimism, however, that he states in the concluding paragraphs that it is by no means impossible that in future operative treatment will be considered only in exceptional cases, surgery being replaced by carefully supervised training of the opto-motor reflexes and by the use of the appropriate hormonal stimulants.

The book is well produced, and the reader cannot fail to be impressed by the enthusiasm and application of the author. To present so clearly a subject so beset with difficulties, and to do this successfully in a strange language, is in itself an achievement.

NOTE

FACULTY OF OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

At a meeting of the Council of the Faculty of Ophthalmologists on May 9, 1952, the following officers were re-elected:

President: - O. M. Duthie.
Vice-Presidents: R. C. Davenport, A. B. Nutt.
Hon. Secretary: J. H. Doggart.
Treasurer: - E. Gordon Mackie.