BOOK REVIEWS

395

viva voce on the contents. How many of us would have known anything about trichorrhexis nodosa, acanthosis nigricans, or byroctrosis? Likewise, few among us were aware that Wohlfahritia magnifica preys upon human eyelids, and that it is possible to catch tenonitis from a dog with distemper. We had all heard about ossification in the choroid, but now Sir Stewart reminds us that bone can also arise in the ruins of a chalazion. Yet his instruction is never portentous, and indeed the reader is from time to time lulled into the delusion that he knows much of it already. Plato would have approved that feeling, because he thought knowledge is but remembrance, or, to cite Sir Thomas Browne's quaint Latinity, "reminiscential evocation, and new Impressions but the colouring of old stamps which stood pale in the soul before".

Great Britain has reason to be proud of Sir Stewart as the author of what is probably the best text-book in any branch of medicine and surgery, but he himself would be the first to emphasize how much he owes to the ophthalmologists of other nations. Indeed his pages are adorned with many a tribute to colleagues all over the world, and he has already been made to feel at home in four continents. The fifth and most distant but by no means the least hospitable of the continents awaits the opportunity to welcome Sir Stewart, and Australasians will acclaim him all the more warmly because of Volume V. We are not likely to see a new book on ophthalmology worthy of comparison with it, until Henry Kimpton completes the distinguished sextet.


Tasmania has an area half that of England and Wales, and a population of less than a quarter of a million. This manageable population in a relatively unmanageable area is the subject of Dr. Bruce Hamilton's survey of the significance of heredity in ophthalmology. Among some 11,000 patients seen in his private practice in 17 years (1931-47), were 148 classified as blind. Of these, 81 were blind from congenital, hereditary, and developmental anomalies—amongst whom he includes fifteen cases of senile cataract. An introductory section on the types and modes of inheritance of genetic eye disease includes a discussion on education and welfare of the blind, and a plea for eugenic measures. The bulk of the monograph is given to detailed family histories; there are 111 pedigrees of eighteen genetic affections, amongst which squint and the refractive errors are included. There are useful pedigrees of the different varieties of cataract, glaucoma, nystagmus, Leber's disease, ptosis, and retinitis pigmentosa. Of special interest are those of a sibship with retinal detachment associated with cystic disease of the lung, of a woman and her niece with choroidal sarcoma, and of a family group with senile macular degeneration.

Dr. Hamilton has continued the work begun by Hogg in 1928, and his data form a useful beginning towards the full assessment of the frequency of genetic disease in a relatively closed community. That in this tedious work he should have found so much of considerable interest indicates not only the care with which the work was carried out, but also the significance of genetics in ophthalmology generally.

Genetics and Disease. By Tage Kemp. 1951. Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh. Pp. 316, 100 illus. (60s.)

Professor Tage Kemp's "Genetics and Disease" is the first comprehensive text-book on the subject in English. There are excellent treatises dealing with special aspects, but none which covers the whole field systematically. The readable "Introduction to Medical Genetics" by Fraser Roberts is devoted to general principles, whilst the two-volume treatise by Ruggles Gates deals largely with their application to the diseases of the different systems. Kemp's orderly treatise falls into five parts. The first hundred pages contain an excellent survey on fundamental principles; they comprise a mass of
BOOK REVIEWS

information bearing on human inheritance that is fairly readily available elsewhere, but neither so systematized nor so concise. If there is any criticism, it is that conciseness in this section has been carried to an extreme, which may make these chapters rather difficult reading to the uninitiated. The methods and mathematics of medical genetics are discussed in the four chapters of the second part wherein essential information, available only in a scattered literature, is presented. The six chapters of the third part deal with the inheritance in man of normal traits, such as physiological features, blood grouping, and psychic qualities, a useful chapter being devoted to constitution and constitutional types. It is only in the last hundred pages that hereditary diseases are considered. The different systems are reviewed briefly and authoritatively. The three concluding chapters of the book, which constitute a fifth section, are devoted to genetic hygiene—a subject of immediate clinical importance, and one to which Professor Kemp has made outstanding contributions.

The book carries 100 illustrations, including both clinical photographs and pedigrees. This comprehensive and authoritative book should do much to stimulate clear thinking and productive work by clinicians. It is unfortunate that the translation from the original Danish is not quite adequate.


This volume provides an excellent groundwork for the orthoptic student. It deals chiefly with orthoptic diagnosis and treatment with an emphasis on the fact that the treatment is in itself a process of teaching and learning.

The manual is divided into two parts. The first part deals with orthoptic problems, including the selection of cases suitable for treatment. It is refreshing here to find a book of this kind severely critical; statements that no treatment is better than useless treatment, and that orthoptic training should not be used as routine treatment in unselected cases, are valuable. The second part deals with orthoptic techniques, which are explained in detail in a manner not covered by any other orthoptic text-book.

All would not agree perhaps with the suggestion that there is no hurry to give orthoptic treatment after operation; or with the idea of devoting six months' effort to correcting anomalous correspondence. The absence of explanatory diagrams is a drawback and definitions of the areas of Panum and of the Swan blind spot syndrome might well have been included. This book is, however, a very valuable and helpful contribution to the subject.

A Technique of Fitting Spectacle Frames. Published by the Association of Dispensing Opticians. 1952. Pp. 20, 2 appendices. A.D.O., London. (2s. 6d.)

This booklet is divided into four main parts:

1. A statement of the basic measurements essential in fitting spectacles.
2. A definition of the measurements.
3. A way of obtaining the measurements.
4. General notes of interest in relation to spectacle fitting.

The two appendices contain drawings of frames and lens shapes. The whole forms an excellent elementary guide to the fitting of spectacles.