

BOOK REVIEWS

The Clinical Pathology of the Aqueous Humour. (Clinique de l'humeur aqueuse pathologique). BY F. VERREY. 1954. Pp. 269, 202 figs. (27 in col.). Delachaux and Niestlé S. A., Paris and Switzerland. (*Swiss Fr.* 64; £5 15s. 6d.)

The work of the Zürich school under the direction of Marc Amsler on the chemical and pathological aspects of the aqueous humour, particularly in cases of iridocyclitis, is already well known. Diagnostic puncture of the anterior chamber had been practised sporadically for more than half a century, but only for scientific purposes and research; since 1941, Amsler has been using the method as a routine diagnostic procedure in the clinic, and the present volume, which is a résumé of some 3,000 such examinations undertaken without mishap, is a useful, interesting, and, at the same time, authoritative recapitulation of the findings. The essential investigations carried out by micro-methods on the 0.1 to 0.2 ml. of aqueous thus obtained are an estimation of the protein content of the aqueous, an enumeration and examination of its cellular content, and serological and bacteriological studies. So far as the technique itself is concerned, the author is satisfied with its ease and safety; indeed the paracentesis often has advantages such as in the assessment of the reaction of the eye to the trauma, as a guide to its probable conduct after more drastic operative procedures, in draining an inflamed eye of toxic products or in providing the opportunity of introducing therapeutic substances (penicillin, etc.) into the anterior chamber. Advanced arteriosclerosis and intra-ocular haemorrhage constitute the only contraindications. On the positive side a considerable amount of valuable information can be gleaned from the protein and crystalline content of the anterior chamber and from the nature and number of the cells present therein—a matter of diagnostic and prognostic importance. In general, in chronic inflammations, lymphocytes and tissue-monocytes do not indicate a bad prognosis unless present in large numbers, while the presence of polymorphonuclear leucocytes and bacterial phagocytes, even if few, suggests the possibility of reactivity and relapses. Bacteriological studies have been less conclusive. Occasionally a positive culture has been obtained particularly during the first 3 or 4 days of an inflammatory attack or a relapse in a chronic inflammation—mainly staphylococci and, as a rarity in severely inflamed eyes, such organisms as the tubercle bacillus and *B. subtilis*; virus culture has not been attempted. It would seem important that these studies should be pursued, since they may bring forward further information on the enigmatic subject of the aetiology of intra-ocular inflammations.

The Year Book of Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat for 1953-4. The Eye edited by DERRICK VAIL. The Ear, Nose and Throat edited by JOHN R. LINDSAY. 1954. The Year Book Publishers, Chicago. Pp. 455, 126 figs. (45s.).

This Year Book maintains the high standard of its predecessors and provides a readable and readily accessible summary of the important papers in ophthalmology which have appeared during the last year. Derrick Vail has again put the profession in his debt by the care with which he has combed the literature of our own and cognate specialties to obtain what is of interest and value, by the presentation of much diverse matter in a readily digestible form, and by the wisdom and common sense of his assessment of many of the contributions.

NOTES

THE Annual Dinner of the Institute of Ophthalmology, London, will be held on Wednesday, November 24, 1954 at, 7.30 for 8 p.m. at the Royal College of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.1. Application for tickets may be made to the Secretary, Institute of Ophthalmology, Judd Street, London, W.C.1.