BOOK REVIEWS


The value of such a book is great. Its adequate editorship (and it is more than adequately edited) must be somewhat of a chore; but the tact, the time, and the writing are worth it. It is very pleasant (as a bed-side book, for example) to browse over the best of the literature that was published between January, 1954, "through" (as the Americans have it) December, 1955. It recalls memories that, with the strange tricks that memories play, have side-tracked the well-trodden reflex paths in everyday use and have hidden themselves away; and once recalled they stay with us longer; moreover even with the best of intentions there are many things that most of us miss altogether and it is good to have the best of these collected and annotated. In the choice of article, as usual, the Editor has been wise; there is nothing of importance that he has missed.

All this is good—in fact, excellent; but can we once again enter the same plea that we lodged in previous years? In the fullness of time we hope the young American civilization will evolve to a stage comparable with the older countries on the other side of the Ocean, and then those of us in this country who are Scottish will not be compelled to buy (for to buy is a "must") a volume half filled with strange information about noses, throats, and ears. Dr. John Lindsay's appreciation of last year's advances in these lowlier territories may be as good as Derrick Vail's excellent résumé of our increasing knowledge of a much more noble organ; it is something, however, that in the book ophthalmology comes first.


Kirby's "Surgery of Cataract", which appeared in 1950 (Ophthalmic Literature, 4, 2739, 1950) and is now a well-known classic, has been followed by a companion volume, "The Advanced Surgery of Cataract", published posthumously. This book deals with significant advances in cataract surgery which have been made since the publication of its predecessor and the author's mature consideration of technical minutiae and the cause and treatment of complications. Anaesthesia and akinesia are fully discussed; the author advises, as a rule, general sedation, topical anaesthesia after a preliminary test for the efficiency or toxicity of the drug used, an injection of local anaesthesia anterior to the tarso-orbital fascia (in preference to a retrobulbar injection), and (usually) curarization. In intracapsular extraction the advisability is stressed of raising the corneal flap to see the iris and the lens directly as well as the zonule, and of performing a large peripheral iridectomy and inserting post-placed sutures (6-0 mild chromic gut): forceps should generally be used, the capsule being preferably grasped in the upper pre-equatorial region, and the zonule being separated, if necessary, by the direct action of a hook. As a general rule, intracapsular extraction is advised after the age of 30, and in younger patients extracapsular extraction, an operation which may well be followed by aspiration of the soft lens matter through a cannule (1 mm. bore) inserted at a later stage through a paracentesis incision. The insertion of an acrylic lens is strongly deprecated and still relegated to the realms of animal experimentation. The complications of the operation as they affect the vitreous, retina, ocular tension, and so on, are also fully discussed.

The book is luxuriously produced and illustrated; although the literature is well annotated, it represents essentially the author's own personal opinions, and with his vast experience and tireless life-study of all aspects of cataract surgery, psychological as well as physical, his opinions, which are always definitely expressed, are deserving of study.