BOOK REVIEWS


New subjects for insertion in the ophthalmological section of this vast French encyclopaedia are collated in loose-leaf form and include: Ocular Physiology by H. Saraux, who deals with (1) the chemical phenomena of vision, (2) electrical phenomena of the retina and optic nerve, (3) physiology of light sensation, (4) the sense of shape and visual acuity, (5) colour vision, and (6) physiology of the visual field; Clinical Examination of Colour Vision and its Anomalies by A. Dubois-Poulsen; Conjunctivitis and Kerato-Conjunctivitis due to Viruses by R. Nataf; Pluriorificial Erosive Ectodermoses by J. François; Intracranial Arterial Aneurysms by P. Desvignes and M. Brun.

The standard of the contributions is maintained and effort is made by the editors to bring the newest and most interesting reports to the attention of the reader.


The theory of magnification, a description of charts for testing visual acuity, and the prescription of suitable aids for those with defective sight occupies about half of this manual. A comprehensive list of available appliances is followed by twelve charts of the newly-introduced target test; a chart of Snellen’s letters ranging from 35/1554 to 35/55 graduated on the basis that each line of letters demands an acuity 80 per cent. of the previous line; a chart showing the calculated reading addition and reading distance in cm.; a reading chart consisting of words made up of lower-case letters without ascenders or descenders; a reading chart composed of different styles and sizes of print used in newspapers, magazines, and books; and finally a table of visual acuity data.

The target test consists in the presentation of targets made up of concentric rings of alternate black and white lines of equal width. These are arranged in series of gradually decreasing width of lines. The essence of this ingenious test is to determine the target in which the narrowest rings can be resolved. By the side of each target are placed two disks of equal size in slightly differing shades of grey such as might be compared with the appearance of the target when the rings cannot be resolved. The test as arranged can be used to detect scotomata and also malingering. In practice, however, elderly patients and the less well educated are slow to grasp what is required of them.

All the tests in the book are designed for a reading distance of 35 cm., but there is much to be said in favour of selecting 25 cm., which conforms with the shorter working distance adopted by the partially sighted and simplifies the mathematical assessment of magnification for near vision. The author also adopts the logarithmic scale in all his charts whereby each line or paragraph represents a visual acuity of 80 per cent. of the preceding one, thereby attaining a more accurate measurement of the lower values of visual acuity than can be got by using Snellen’s notation. This idea was first suggested in 1868 (Green, 1869), and Green’s article was recently resuscitated independently by Keeler in his “A” Series.

The author lays much stress on adhering to normal refraction procedures. These hold good for plus spherical additions, but are not applicable when telescopic combinations have to be used. It would seem to be much simpler to estimate the magnification needed to enable an eye of known refraction and acuity at 25 cm., with presbyopic correction if necessary, to perform a specific task. Much confusion would be avoided if this were accepted generally and the various aids classified according to their magnifying power, working distance, and field of vision.
BOOK REVIEWS

Much useful information is given about the value and limitations of the many aids on the market, with sound advice on prescribing the most suitable aid to meet the needs of individual cases. The patient's adaptation to a visual aid is discussed, including Friang's methods of re-education. Accessories helpful to the partially sighted include well-tried ruses which are widely used, but their inclusion will be helpful to those coming newly to this field.

This is a practical book which contains much useful information on the subject of visual aids, but it cannot be described as a simple guide to the selection of the most suitable optical visual aid for the individual patient.

REFERENCE

GREEN, J. (1869). Trans. Amer. ophthal. Soc. (Fifth Annual Meeting, 1868), 1, 68.

NOTES

THE GONIN FESTIVAL

The "Gonin Festival" was held at the Palais de Rumine in the Senate Chamber of the University of Lausanne on July 12, 1958.

The procedure for the allocation and presentation of the Gonin Medal has now become stabilized and this was the first "routine" occasion; it is hoped that it will become an important and pleasant ophthalmological tradition.

The Gonin Medal in gold is presented every 4 years conjointly by the University of Lausanne and the Swiss Ophthalmological Society, in memory of their most distinguished ophthalmological alumnus and member. The medal is given to the person who is internationally considered to have contributed most lavishly to ophthalmology. In order to ensure that the choice is widely acceptable throughout the world, the International Council of Ophthalmology appoints every 8 years a commission of seven distinguished ophthalmologists from seven different countries to suggest names of potential candidates; from these the recipient is chosen by the council itself at its meeting before each International Congress of Ophthalmology. The medallist visits the University of Lausanne a short time before each congress, delivers an oration, and receives a certificate from the Rector of the University entitling him to claim the medal. The medal itself is presented at each Congress.

On July 12 a very delightful ceremony took place wherein Dr. Edmond Grin, the Rector of the University, opened the proceedings. The president of the International Council (Duke-Elder) introduced the medallist, Prof. Alan C. Woods of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, explaining the reasons for the choice of the council. The professor of ophthalmology of the University of Lausanne (Streiff) detailed the brilliant career of the medallist and his immense contributions to ophthalmology. Thereafter Prof. Woods delivered the Gonin Oration.

FACULTY OF OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

At a Council meeting on July 11, 1958, the following officers were elected for 1958–1959:

President: Mr. L. H. Savin
Vice-Presidents: Mr. E. G. Mackie
Hon. Treasurer: Mr. A. McKie Reid
Hon. Secretary: Mr. E. F. King