BOOK REVIEW


This book, which is dedicated to the memory of Walter B. Lancaster and Richard G. Scobee, who were contributors to the first edition and whose work in the realm of ocular motility has been so valuable, gives an up to date account of certain problems of strabismus. Although each chapter is devoted to a different topic, there is some inevitable repetition as in so many books of multiple authorship. One does not, however, expect to find repetition word-for-word in a single chapter, as in Chapter I, where several paragraphs on pages 70 and 71 are exactly repeated on page 104!

With the recent work of Warwick (Brain, 1955, 78, 92) one would have expected to find, in a book of this sort, some reference to the modern view that the convergence centre in the mid-brain is probably a myth. It is also a pity that the treatment of eccentric fixation and amblyopia by the after-image method of Cüppers has not received adequate attention. The chapters written by Costenbader are of good practical value and it is nice to see that he prefers the word “phenomenon” in relation to the “A” and “V” processes rather than “syndrome”.

As a new contribution to this symposium, the chapter by Phillip Knapp on the surgical treatment of strabismus contains much sound common sense, although one cannot agree with his statement that, in cases of accommodative esotropia in which the deviation is entirely overcome by the wearing of correct lenses, operation is contraindicated “because the visual axes will almost surely diverge in later life”. However, it is refreshing to read that the question of when to operate should be decided by considering each case on its individual merits and not by some prescribed rule of thumb.

The chapters on anatomy and physiology, by Walter H. Fink and Frances Heed Alder respectively, are valuable and well illustrated, and the contribution of Hermann M. Burian on aetiology is clear and concise. He sums up the position by saying “regardless of the ultimate cause it is helpful to keep in mind that at least two factors must be operative in each condition of heterotropia—a mechanical or innervational factor to produce a latent deviation and a fusion factor to cause it to become manifest”.

Not the least interesting part of this book is the account of a round-table discussion in which there is a free exchange of views by the different participants (sometimes very divergent!). The appendix by the late Walter B. Lancaster is excellent. Here he clarifies terminology and gives some valuable criticisms and suggestions, such as that “alternating sursumduction” is the only rational name for the condition which has been labelled “alternating hyperphoria”, “alternating hypertropia”, and “anaphoria”.

Although this book would be all the better if it were somewhat shorter—and this could be achieved largely by avoiding repetition and reducing details of case records—it is a work which no one interested in the problems of strabismus can afford to omit studying.

NOTES

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

A meeting of the International Council of Ophthalmology was held during the XVIII International Congress of Ophthalmology in Brussels, on September 6, 1958. The following is a brief résumé of the more important business.

(1) Report of the Treasurer.—The financial position of the Council was reported to be satisfactory. The contribution to the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences came under review. Hitherto the C.I.O.M.S. had received 100 U.S. dollars