

## CORRESPONDENCE

### DIAGNOSIS OF DIPLOPIA

*To the Editorial Committee of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY*

SIRS,—The article by E. C. Cowan (*Brit. J. Ophthal.*, 1960, **44**, 59), describing a simple apparatus for the diagnosis and recording of diplopia, prompts me to make a few observations.

His instrument uses a method not unlike that which I described some years ago (*Brit. J. Ophthal.*, 1949, **33**, 54) and which is still available in an improved form called the "Lees Screen" from Theodore Hamblin Ltd. Mr. Cowan appears to be unaware of this screen as he does not mention it in his article.

My early experiments led me to conclude that the use of a small screen, as in Mr. Cowan's apparatus, because of the short working distance involved, leads to errors from the eyes converging secondarily to the accommodation which is brought into play.

The need to invert the screen by such a method as Mr. Cowan's was recognized by me, and was obviated on my screen by a double mirror and by screens on which the tangent scale is invisible until illuminated, so enabling the testing of each eye without moving the screens in any way.

I came to the conclusion that portability, although occasionally convenient, was better sacrificed for the benefits which a larger and more refined, though static, instrument conferred.

Yours truly,

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Dynamic Electroretinography in Ophthalmology.** (L'électrorétinographie dynamique en ophtalmologie.) By G. E. JAYLE, R. L. BOYER, and R. L. CAMO. 1959. Pp. vi + 161. Masson, Paris. (41s.)

After 20 years of hard work, electroretinography has still not been shown to be of any real clinical significance. Any attempt to increase its usefulness is to be applauded. The authors of this monograph have evolved a technique which enables them to record the ERG during the various phases of dark adaptation, and in response to flicker and light of different wavelength. They can assess these records in many different ways.

But, in order to gain useful information from such records, it is necessary to have sound knowledge of the basic physiology of vision and the physics both of the recording situation and of the instrument one uses: in these respects this work is unsatisfactory. The review of previous work is superficial and frequently incorrect, and the section on technique and possible errors is inadequate. These authors do not use non-polarizable electrodes. They do not immobilize the pupil (though they investigate the results of alternating stimulus intensity). They use an inadequate time constant (0.3 sec.) and a pen-recorder which is not only incapable of following changes with the desired rapidity, but also writes

on curved co-ordinates, thus making the latency measurements (on which great store is set) inaccurate.

The new technique has been standardized on a group of twenty young adults. The normal ERGs differ widely, and no mention is made of the fact that one individual may produce ERGs of widely differing form. Since the patients investigated were mostly elderly, the choice of young adults as normals is not a very happy one. Nevertheless, the authors may fairly claim to have diagnosed senile macular degeneration electroretinographically, though their claims with respect to other retinal pathologies are open to doubt. The monograph closes with a 50-page bibliography which is indeed useful but would have more value were it complete, were the references given in the usually accepted manner, and were the attached abstracts more critical.

**May and Worth's Manual of Diseases of the Eye.** By T. Keith Lyle and A. G. Cross. 12th ed., 1959. Pp. 759, 305 figs, 65 col. pl. Baillière, Tindall and Cox, London.

Since it first appeared in America 60 years ago this useful text-book has established itself so firmly into the literature that a review of the 12th edition seems almost unnecessary. As a compendium for the medical student and a source of reference for the general practitioner or intending specialist, it is a useful guide, particularly in view of the stress placed on the relationship between ophthalmology and general medicine. It is so good that the impulse in the reviewer to make some suggestions is irresistible in order to make it better. The importance and frequency of virus infections of the outer and inner eye are perhaps not sufficiently stressed and it seems unnecessary to treat inclusion blennorrhoea of the new-born by painting with silver nitrate when topical antibiotics are so effective. In the diagram of the pupillary dilator pathways (and by inference in the text) the only sympathetic cell-station indicated is in the ciliary ganglion; there sometimes are sympathetic cells in this ganglion the function of which is unknown, but the essential cell-station is the superior cervical ganglion. Finally (in the volume received for review), it will be an excellent exercise for the student to insert the several letters and numbers in the legend into the naked simplicity of Plate xiii.

**Light Coagulation (Lichtkoagulation).** By G. Meyer-Schwickerath. 1959. *Klin. Mbl. Augenheilk.*, Suppl. 33. Pp. 96, 55 figs, bibl. Enke, Stuttgart. (D.M. 15.60).

This monograph on light coagulation gives a résumé of the very interesting history and development of this method of treatment, from using the sun as a source of light, then a carbon arc lamp, and finally the Xenon arc lamp.

A brief description of the histological changes which occur after treatment gives the reader the essential background for deciding which cases are suitable.

The main groups of retinal lesions, not only holes in the retina which may cause detachments, but certain tumours of the retina and choroid which are amenable to eradication, are described and illustrated before and after treatment.

Finally, a short chapter on the treatment of certain iris lesions and surface tumours at the limbus completes a masterly introduction to this vigorous rapidly-growing subject.

#### BOOK REVIEWED IN *Ophthalmic Literature*

The following monograph has been received and a review will appear in the June issue of *Ophthalmic Literature* (Vol. 13, No. 4).

**The Metabolism of the Lens (Untersuchungen zum Stoffwechsel der Augenlinse).** By M. von Stackelberg. 1959. Pp. 39, 10 figs., 25 refs, Forschungsbericht 710. Westdeutscher Verlag, Köln (D.M. 11.50.)