BOOK REVIEWS


This monograph on the comparatively new method of testing the function of the ocular muscles by the electromyogram (EMG) is written by a neurologist and an ophthalmic surgeon, both of Hamburg University. After introductory remarks about the anatomy and the electro-physiological responses of the ocular compared with the skeletal muscles, the authors discuss the individual lesions of the muscles of the eye. This demonstrates the helpfulness of the EMG in deciding whether the lesion affects the supranuclear centres, the nerve axon, the neuro-muscular synopsis, or the muscular fibres themselves. The book is written in a precise and interesting manner. Electromyography throws light on the mechanism of the oculomotor disturbance: e.g., in thyrotoxicosis it shows that the oculomotor symptoms are due to an endocrine myopathy and muscular contraction and not to nervous influences. After paralysis EMG reveals the regeneration long before any motility is visible. A very important role is played by EMG in cases of ptosis, proptosis, and chemosis in which orbital neoplasm is suspected. The authors quote Reese’s statement that in 50 per cent. of such cases in which the orbit had been entered nothing more than an inflammation of the ocular muscles and tissues was found. The EMG would have prevented such an error. It must be remembered that the correct interpretation of the EMG requires some experience as the graphs obtained are not so standardized and characteristic as those of an electrocardiogram.

The usefulness of the book is enhanced by a detailed English summary and an extensive list of the literature.


The eleventh volume of L’année thérapeutique et clinique–ophtalmologie, introduced by a note from Edouard Hartmann, is divided into two parts. The first is a comprehensive discussion on the functional examination of the eye. It is introduced by an interesting discussion by the veteran, Y. Le Grand, on the physical, anatomical, and physiological ground-work of vision and its physico-chemical basis (photo-chemical, quantal). Thereafter, the testing of the visual field is fully described in eight chapters: the techniques of perimetry and campimetry, the subjective investigation of metamorphopsia by Amsler’s charts, the common field-defects in glaucoma, and diseases of the optic nerve, the chiasma, and the central visual pathways. This is followed by chapters on adaptometry, the testing of colour vision, and electroretinography.

The second part of the volume deals with a series of subjects in the manner to which we have become accustomed in this excellent series: typical subjects are the errors to avoid in the surgical treatment of glaucoma, the treatment of nystagmus, retro-orbital neuralgia, photophobia, trophic keratitis, virus infections of the eye, and disseminated sclerosis. Each article is of interest.