BOOK REVIEWS


Philps’s text-book of ophthalmic operations needs no introduction to the student or practitioner of ophthalmic surgery, and it has fallen to John Foster to revise and augment the text in its second edition. The original purpose of the book remains unaltered, and it is intended to be read by those taking the Final F.R.C.S. or an equivalent examination, and by those ophthalmic surgeons in practice who operate relatively infrequently.

For a text-book to fulfil the needs of the post-graduate student, it should include those techniques which form the standard surgical practice of an eye hospital, and in this respect there are omissions in many of the sections of the present volume. Light-coagulation, Sato’s posterior corneal incision for astigmatism, and operative methods involving the operating microscope are deliberately omitted until the next edition, to enable the author to gain further personal experience of these advances in ophthalmic surgery. Everbusch’s technique is not mentioned in the section on ptosis surgery, canaliculoplasty does not appear among the operations for the relief of obstruction at the junction between canaliculi and sac, and the increasingly popular keratome-and-scissors section for extracapsular cataract extraction is not described. An important development in the localization of intra-ocular foreign bodies, the Roper-Hall locator, which also enables the distinction to be made between magnetic and non-magnetic metallic foreign bodies, does not appear in the section on this subject. In the section on retinal detachments, no mention is made of any volume-reducing procedure other than scleral resection, and Scheppens’s method, Arruga’s encircling suture, and the Custodis implant could well have been included.

Equally, some indication should be given of the present trend in techniques resulting from improved instruments and materials, as, for example, the replacement of conjunctival flaps and hoods in corneal-wound surgery by direct corneal sutures. The relegation of the use of vitreous implantation in detachment surgery to the place of an “operation of despair” is to give that procedure less credit than it deserves. In the same sentence cyclodiathermy is indicated to be an equally desperate operation, a point of view with which many post-graduate examiners may not agree.

It must be very difficult to include within a reasonable compass all that the impending Fellowship candidate must know, but if this book is to fill its intended place it should surely be enlarged sufficiently to incorporate the necessary additional material. Alternatively, the preliminary chapter might be shortened, or the individual case histories, which add to the interest but not to the teaching merit of the volume, might be omitted.

Provided that the post-graduate student reads the book with that discernment which he should have learned even in his under-graduate studies, he will gain a practical knowledge of ophthalmic operations which he will find it difficult to discover in any other single volume of similar proportions, and he will certainly be able to look forward to further editions of this well-established reference book.


Some workers cap a long series of researches, neatly tying up loose ends and providing a rationalized viewpoint of their object of study. Other manage to pioneer where many have trodden before, and, on crashing through an obstruction at the end of a long valley,
reveal a new vista full of promise. The authors of the present report are to be classed with the discoverers. They have made a detailed study of the optical “constants” of the eyes of the growing child, correlating them with other bodily characteristics and establishing what future workers will indubitably come to regard as a norm. They have shown how the optics of the eye compensate changes in the (optical) size of the eye-ball, and how myopia may well arise from a failure of such compensation to be brought about. The text is fully documented with tables and graphs, and it would perhaps be churlish to cavil at the restricted use of statistics, as evidenced, for example, in connexion with Fig. 4, which relates the lens power to age. The report is pregnant with suggestions for future work, for example into relations with the colour of skin: there are many schools in London where it must now be possible to test whether or not alleged racial or genetic factors are perhaps attributable to matters of diet or vice versa. Furthermore, to say that compensation occurs in the majority of children is to give a description, not an explanation. It would appear that a detailed anatomical study of the properties of the sclera is indicated: why does the eye grow only axially? Or does it? Clinicians and research workers are indebted to Professor Sorsby and his colleagues for an account of a fine study and for the inspiration to do a lot of hard thinking, and—dare one say it?—more work.


The foreword of the second volume pays tribute to Suzanne Schiff-Wertheimer, who was one of the co-authors of the first volume, and whose death has deprived France of yet another of her foremost ophthalmologists, a loss which will be felt particularly by those who have met Dr. Schiff-Wertheimer at many international meetings.

In this volume, which follows the general lines of its predecessor, affections of the conjunctiva, cornea, lids, and lacrimal apparatus are considered with the detail and critical analysis with which the reader has already become familiar. The authors have obviously read their subject widely, and they have included many of the most modern operative techniques, together with the better-known classical methods. Particularly comprehensive is the section on plastic surgery of the lids; the importance of careful reconstruction of the lids with re-constitution of the lacrimal passages is emphasized by the detailed consideration of the operative procedures. The many illustrations add clarity to the text.

In the third and final volume, sections are devoted to strabismus, retinal detachments, tumours of the globe, orbital and ocular prosthesis, and affections of the orbit. Anatomical details are included in some sections, and pre-operative care and complications are given that critical consideration which adds so much to the value of a text-book of surgical technique. As pre- and post-operative care are especially important in strabismus and retinal detachment surgery, their inclusion in these sections could reasonably have been anticipated: and the authors have been careful to omit nothing which will be of help to the surgeon in his assessment of a particular case. Continued emphasis throughout the book on the importance of knowing which operation to select and when to do it, together with a practical description of the actual technique, makes this an invaluable guide to the post-graduate student and the experienced surgeon alike.

Great credit must go to both authors and publishers for incorporating the most modern techniques, and this is especially noticeable in the section on detachment surgery, which includes the methods of Custodis, Arruga, and Schepens, and the light-coagulation techniques of Meyer-Schwickerath.

As the impeccable American of the blurb has it, in this monograph "there is information on 'why-to-do-it' as well as 'how-to-do-it'". In short, Dr. Jacobson has attempted a comprehensive review giving not only an historical but also a physiological account, a description of technique, and a summary of all the electroretinographic abnormalities so far encountered in clinical work.

In spite of this ambitious outline the book is short—170 pages, including many large diagrams. The text is simple and easy to read, so that the author has, to some extent, triumphed over the demands of compression. These, however, can still be appreciated, for the author's method is to refer to the original sources, and with so little space at his disposal he sometimes has room for little more than a list of references. Results which contradict each other are listed with no attempt to discriminate between bad and good work; for example, it is generally held that the electroretinogram is unaffected by centrifugal nervous control: Dr. Jacobson gives a list of publications, some poorly documented, some certainly artefactual, which suggest the reverse. (The choice of references is sometimes capricious; for example, there are many results which show that the β-wave amplitude is related to light intensity over a range nearer to 10^7 than 10^2.5 as quoted on p. 15.)

While monographs of this nature can never be quite up to date, it is unfortunate that in the month preceding the publication of this book definitive papers have appeared which supersede a good deal of Dr. Jacobson's discussion of the origin of the α- and β-waves.

In the section on techniques, Dr. Jacobson is not at his happiest. The vastly oversimplified account of the behaviour of hard valves and transistors occupies far too much room. It is also replete with errors. This and the inclusion of unnecessary items on cathode followers and ERG simulators leaves the author little space for discussion of points which are of practical use. The question of the bandwidth of the amplifiers used is dealt with summarily (the figure showing the effect of altering the time constant is wrongly labelled) and there is no mention of the problem of rectilinear recording, most important since the study of the ERG is concerned with latencies and wave-forms. The author does not apparently realize that modern high-speed direct writers can provide a completely faithful record of ERG wave-forms. The inexperienced should be warned against the inadequacies of this section. It is not necessary, as recommended by Dr. Jacobson, to employ a shielded room for recording and the provision of a fuse in the input circuit is not necessary unless one uses Dr. Jacobson's own form of input circuit.

The clinical results are exhaustive and extremely well presented. A novel classification of retinal disease from both the anatomical and functional point of view is well suited to Dr. Jacobson's material, for he has been able to sub-divide the groups of "heredo-degenerations" by means of electroretinographic technique. It is very intriguing to see how he utilizes the results of other tests of retinal function (e.g., dark-adaptometry, perimetry) to illuminate the ERG results and vice versa. The rational analysis of a whole group of retinal degenerations according to the specific functional defect (and not merely according to the ophthalmoscopic appearance) is a long overdue reform and one which Dr. Jacobson is tackling with great success. In this section all the material is derived from Dr. Jacobson's own clinic. Where he does not rely on his own experience (e.g., the ERG in detachment, hypertension, and glaucoma), he summarizes papers again too briefly, and without any attempt at appraisal. It is this reluctance to pass judgment which basically prevents his book, for all its virtues, from being the standard handbook that it otherwise might have been. However, it presents a convenient and unique summary of all clinical results to date (and Dr. Jacobson has scoured the world literature) and this makes it a valuable source-book, well worth possessing on this count alone.
BOOK REVIEWS


This book provides the most complete account of virus diseases of the eye at present available. It is inevitable, in such a rapidly advancing field, that any book should soon fall behind the advancing edge of knowledge. This is happening in respect of the virology of trachoma and inclusion blennorrhoea, but the book does include references to the earlier definitive papers of the Chinese and British workers up to the end of 1959. It will long remain a valuable work of reference and a landmark in the subject as a whole.

The book is in four parts. The first (149 pages) reviews the notions of general virology and viruses as ocular pathogens in Pierre Lépine's inimitable discursive fashion.

The second part (367 pages) presents virus diseases of the eye on a regional basis; the lids, conjunctiva, sclera, cornea, uvea, optic nerve, oculomotor functions, retina, and the viral embryopathies are thus discussed.

The third part (337 pages) presents the ocular manifestations of generalized virus infections (or that which may become generalized) and summarizes the virology of the agents concerned. Included are the encephalitis- and meningitis-producing agents and the enteric viruses, although these have so far been shown to be responsible for but little eye disease. Similarly, the diseases and agents of ornithosis are presented because of their relation with the trachoma and inclusion blennorrhoea agents. Cat-scratch disease is presented as being of established viral aetiology along with the members of the psittacosis-lymphogranuloma venereum group although many workers regard these claims with considerable reserve.

The adenoviruses are adequately discussed and this, along with many other features, represents a considerable advance on other books dealing with virus diseases of the eye.

The fourth part (131 pages) presents syndromes generally considered to be of a viral nature. There discussed are the bullous and ulcerative mucocutaneous diseases, including pemphigus and erythema multiforme, Reiter's disease, Behçet's disease, and also the Harada and Vogt-Koyanagi diseases, and sympathetic ophthalmitis. Other authors would classify these as no more than possibly of viral aetiology.

The arrangement of the book makes both repetition and copious cross-reference inescapable. It is clearly set out, makes easy reading, and contains very few ambiguities, but has a number of wrong spellings of authors' names. It is very well illustrated, with 172 black-and-white illustrations and 11 black-and-white and 17 colour plates, each of the last comprising six photographs. It is surprising to find some of the illustrations appearing more than once, and several of the figures, both in black-and-white and in colour, duplicate the same information. The book is comprehensive but with a less repetitive format much more detail could have been included in a volume of this size and a fuller presentation with a more critical appraisal of the laboratory evidence on controversial topics would have greatly increased the value of the work for subsequent authors. However, the only really unsatisfactory section of the book is the bibliography. Some omissions are no doubt a matter of selection, but again and again an author is quoted in the text without the reference being listed in the ensuing bibliography. This is inexcusable, for it will be a continuing annoyance to all those working in virus diseases to whom the book will otherwise be of the greatest value and who will, no doubt, refer to its pages for many years to come.


Monographs on a limited subject, making a comprehensive study readily possible and at the same time reasonably compact, are now justifiably becoming common. One
OBITUARY

HENRICUS JACOBUS MARIE WEVE, 1888–1962

The year 1962 opened sorrowfully for ophthalmology, for Weve, one of the greatest ophthalmologists of our generation, died on the night of January 3rd, in his 73rd year.

Born at Nijmegen, he studied medicine from 1906 to 1912 at Amsterdam, and thereafter, serving his ophthalmological apprenticeship under Straub and subsequently at Würzburg, he was appointed Chief Surgeon to the Eye Hospital at Rotterdam in 1916 and in 1929 was nominated professor of ophthalmology and director of the Royal Netherlands Eye Hospital at Utrecht, posts which he retained until he retired in 1958; in this delightful academic city which he loved, Weve worked for the remainder of his life and here he died, a worthy successor of Donders and the two Snellens.

It was by hard and unremitting work, aided by an unusually keen and original intelligence and a natural flair for surgery, that Weve rose at a comparatively early age to a position of international fame and made his clinic a centre of pilgrimage from many lands. His original contributions to our specialty were innumerable and many of them of outstanding merit. His early work on uveitis and keratitis was remarkable; but even more so was his whole-hearted adoption and technical improvement of Gonin’s technique for the operation of retinal detachment in the late 1920s, an operation for which he maintained a world-wide reputation to the end of his life. In his later years his greatest interest lay in the treatment of malignant intra-ocular tumours by diathermy.

Weve revelled in the quiet academic life of Utrecht and took a prominent part in the activities of the University of which he was Rector Magnificus in 1949–50. The only disturbance in its even tenor was war. In the first world war he served in the Royal Dutch Army (1914–18), and from the unhappiness, anxieties, and deprivations of enemy occupation during the second he emerged emaciated, white-haired, and older.

Rewards and honours—all of them well merited—were heaped upon Weve during his lifetime. At home he was Oculist to the Royal House of Holland, a member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Science, and twice president of the Dutch Ophthalmological Society, and in addition held six State orders and decorations. Abroad he was an honorary member of the Royal Society of Medicine, the American Academy of Ophthalmology...