BOOK REVIEWS


This is an excellent volume dealing with those aspects of corneal diseases wherein rapid changes and interesting advances are occurring at the present time, typified in the replacement of ulcers of bacterial origin by infections of viral origin since antibiotics and corticosteroids have come into common therapeutic use, in the widespread employment of contact lenses, and in the increasing popularity of keratoplasty. The volume is prefaced by a short summary by D. M. Maurice of recent advances in knowledge of the physiology of the cornea with their pathological implications. An essay on the changing pattern of corneal ulceration by P. A. Graham is followed by a résumé of the differential diagnosis of punctate keratitis by B. R. Jones; the toxic and metabolic disorders of the cornea are well described by H. E. Hobbs, neoplasms by K. C. Wybar, and scleral contact lenses by F. Ridley. There are six papers on keratoplasty: the prolonged storage of corneae by A. U. Smith, surgical techniques by Sir Benjamin Rycroft, complications by A. G. Leigh, application to aphakia by T. A. Casey, post-graft membrane by A. Werb, and therapeutic applications by D. Pierce. On all these subjects the book gives a clear and concise summary of modern views.


La société française d’ophtalmologie is once more to be congratulated on its choice of authors, Ourgaud and Étienne, to elaborate and record the functional examination of the glaucomatous eye. This is a comprehensive piece of work covering the complete literature of the subject in a dispassionate manner. No sides are taken, and largely the original workers speak for themselves in the incisive idiom of scientific French. A short opening chapter on the frequency of glaucoma is followed by a valuable discourse on the basic subjects—even logarithmics, statistics, and trigonometry are lightly discussed. Tonometry is carefully and thoroughly reviewed, leading to an interpretation of the tonometric findings and their variation.

The aqueous humour, its formation, entrance, flow, and exit are followed in detail, leading to the mounting literature on tonography and its results. Aqueous veins, provocative tests, light sense, light difference, and colour vision are explored and explained.

There are chapters on visual acuity, critical frequency of fusion, and on the visual fields and their measurement. There are two final sections, one on ophthalmodynamometry in glaucoma and one on electroretinography.


The first volume of this series covering modern problems in ophthalmology was published in 1957 on the occasion of Franceschetti’s 60th birthday; the second is devoted
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to a single subject—the technique of retinal photoocoagulation introduced by Meyer-Schwickerath—and contains the papers read at a meeting of the Gonin Club by many of those who have had experience of this relatively recent innovation in surgical practice. It deals specifically with the indications for the method, its limitations and contraindications, and the complications that may arise in its application not only to the problem of retinal detachment but also to pathological conditions of the lids, conjunctiva, cornea, and uveal tract, ranging from tumours on the one hand to Eales's disease on the other. The value of these papers is much enhanced by the full discussions which follow them. The contributors are drawn from Europe, the United States, and South Africa, and the volume gives a very sound and comprehensive appreciation of the status of this important addition to our surgical armamentarium.


This short monograph deals with the clinical features of the more common tumours affecting the eye and its adnexa in infancy, childhood, and adolescence, including those of the lids, the conjunctiva, the eye itself, and the orbit, and their treatment both by irradiation and by surgery. Tumours are considered in their widest sense, and lesions simulating them—xanthomata, chalazia, hordeola, mucoceles, and even arterio-venous fistulae—find their place. There is a specific interest in the neoplasms which occur in the young, not only because certain types are characteristic of that age, but also because the incidence and behaviour of tumours that are common to all ages differ considerably in the first decade of life. The monograph is a personal one based on the authors' experiences rather than the literature, so that conditions which they themselves have not encountered and studied are not discussed. As would be expected, however, from a surgeon at Johns Hopkins and a paediatrician at Georgetown, their experience has been considerable and their presentation of the problems arising from it is indeed valuable.


Ophthalmology in the tropics differs widely from the ophthalmology seen clinically in temperate countries, not only because many of the diseases common to the two are considerably modified by climatic and social habits but also because many diseases rarely seen in more northern latitudes are commonplace in the equatorial belt. The protean ocular effects of malnutrition, leprosy, or onchocerciasis are examples. Such conditions are rarely sufficiently accentuated in our text-books, but the ease and frequency of travel make some knowledge of them desirable for practitioners all over the world. In this short hand-book simple factual descriptions are given of the more common conditions seen in tropical and subtropical areas; these, although not detailed or provided with references to the literature, should be of great value to those who practise in tropical regions or see patients coming from them.


This book makes a timely appearance because it coincides with an increasing appreciation of the importance of electromyography in understanding the complex nature of normal and abnormal ocular movements. There is an excellent descriptive section on the instrumentation which is required in obtaining and recording precise information of the electrical activity of the muscles at rest and during movement, and this is followed by a concise discussion of the general principles of electromyography. A detailed account is given of the knowledge which is accumulating on the normal actions of the muscles, such
as the differences between saccadic and tonic movements, the general application of the laws of reciprocal innervation to most forms of movement, although under certain conditions there may be a co-contraction of the antagonists, the role of the auxiliary rotators, and the active nature of movements of divergence (relative convergence).

The book concludes with separate accounts of many of the conditions which cause an upset of ocular motility against the background of recent electromyographic findings; for example, the early diagnosis of cases of myasthenia gravis, in which a progressive decrease in the electrical activity of the affected muscles is due to a gradual reduction of the number of active motor units (in contrast to the gradual decrease in activity of all the motor units which characterizes lower motor neurone lesions), the dynamic imbalance of the phenomenon of reciprocal innervation in paretic squint, and the clear-cut distinction which exists between ocular myopathy and ocular neuropathy—it now seems clear that progressive external ophthalmoplegia is a pure myopathy and not a cranial nuclear failure, a concept which explains the invariable absence of involvement of the intrinsic ocular muscles in this condition.

The opening pages are devoted to a fairly lengthy historical survey of the subject, but it is doubtful if such a modern theme requires a chronological catalogue of events, particularly as most of the material is dealt with more appropriately in the other parts of the book. This book should be read by all who are interested in the movements of the eyes in health and disease.


This little book is designed to give patients with cataract a simple explanation of the nature of the disease and its surgical treatment. While it may succeed in its purpose with an intelligent patient, the more timorous may find the operative details more alarming than reassuring.

NOTES

XIX INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

New Delhi, December 3 to 7, 1962

For some weeks before the Congress was due to start there was some doubt whether our Indian hosts would be able to implement their plans, or, at any rate, to conduct a congress with the usual elaborate panoply which is characteristic of most international meetings. For over the international situation clouds were brooding and along the Indo-Chinese border serious fighting had broken out in which the unprepared Indian forces were compelled to retreat. Throughout the country there existed the atmosphere of crisis. Fortunately, however, just before the Congress was due to start, the political situation quietened and a cease-fire was declared. In difficult circumstances our Indian hosts accepted the challenge and rose magnificently to a situation that was undoubtedly difficult both politically and economically, so that the meeting was conducted as scheduled with the exception that some of the social events were cut out or damped down; a State reception by the President of India, for example, was cancelled and the Official Banquet, shorn of its Ministerial guests, became a family dinner. It is true that doubts concerning the international situation kept some prospective delegates and associate members away; but nevertheless, 1,325 attended the meeting and everyone found the experience rewarding. They were officially welcomed by the Government of India by the issue of postage stamps bearing the badge of the Congress.

New Delhi is an excellent city wherein to hold a large meeting of this type. The modern city itself with its imposing government buildings and magnificent gardens is beautifully