BOOK REVIEWS


This is an elaborate treatise on nystagmus dealing with the anatomical and physiological characteristics of the motor apparatus of the eye and the related central nervous system, the signs and symptoms of the various types of nystagmus, and the appropriate treatment—medical, optical, and surgical. There is a considerable bibliography.


The appearance of the second edition of this fine work is an event of considerable importance in ophthalmology and pathology and all the more so since we are presented with a book which has been extensively rewritten. Although having essentially the same general arrangement, much of the text and subject matter is entirely new and is now printed attractively in a double column page with bold-face headings and many additional illustrations. More importantly there has been a change in the fundamental nature of the book, for while the author originally wrote from his own personal experience and convictions, he now extends his scope to survey critically the whole of present-day knowledge of tumours affecting directly or indirectly the eye and its adnexa. It is virtually a new book and to say it outshines the first edition is to give the highest praise.

Some omissions in the original script have been remedied; kerato-akanthoma, inverted follicular keratosis, benign calcifying epithelioma, retinal anlage tumours, and so on, now find a place; doubtful entities like epithelioma of the lens have happily vanished, and drusen of the optic disc have all been included in the pathology of tuberous sclerosis. The author has considerably modified his views on the origin of pigmented tumours of the eye, all melanomata of the uvea and all blue naevi being neurogenic and those of the skin and conjunctiva epitheliogenic. This is in line with modern thought in pathology, and is more readily acceptable than his original classification, wherein uveal melanomata were grouped as schwannian or stromal, since there was a difficulty in deciding upon the histogenesis of mixed cell types. The statement that naevus cells are normally present in the uvea and may give rise to tumours requires more convincing evidence. One would have thought it well-nigh impossible to identify such cells in the uvea with certainty, and difficult to differentiate them from small spindle cells cut transversely. This is a question of terminology, which arises also in other sections, thus precancerous keratosis, leucoplakia, dyskeratosis, dyskera-totic cancerous lesions, and Bowen’s disease require more distinctive definition if they are all to be retained.

The chapters on pigmented tumours of the epithelium of the iris and retina, on the lacrimal gland (unaccountably separated from its sac), and on retinoblastoma (with larval granulomatosis appearing for the first time in its differential diagnosis) have been especially extended and further illustrated. There are valuable summaries of the present position regarding radiation therapy in retinoblastoma, with and without chemotherapy, and an evaluation of the role of light-coagulation and diathermy, while the hereditary factors concerned are now more closely examined and shown to be of a greater complexity than originally thought. As would be expected the author’s skill is most apparent when he is dealing with difficult aspects of the subject and, although there may not be general agreement with his nomenclature, the chapters on leiomyoma and rhabdomyosarcoma are two perfect examples of his wise interpretation of up-to-date knowledge. The claim that haemangiomata may affect “any intra-ocular or extra-ocular structure” is an obvious and minor error of generalization.

Dr. Reese is surely unrivalled in his knowledge and experience of the clinical and pathological aspects of his subject, so that it is not surprising that his beautifully produced book should be at once unique, scholarly, and practical, needing no recommendation from its reviewer, for it already holds an honoured place in the laboratory, the consulting room, and the library, and will continue to do so for many years to come.