BOOK REVIEWS


This little book is planned to give the reader a brief outline of the current methods of treatment of strabismus as practised in the Motility Service at the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary and in the Out-patient Department of the University of Illinois Research and Education Hospital, where between 125 and 150 patients are seen each week.

It is written in a colloquial style in which the author frequently changes from addressing his reader by the first person singular to the use of the imperial "we", and finally to the cookery book approach of giving certain directions in the imperative—all this on the same page. For instance, on page 46 we read: "I generally use cyclogyl...", followed three lines below by, "You must be careful...", and in the next paragraph "Again we divide...".

It is a pity there are so many didactic statements which are quite inaccurate, such as: "It is extremely difficult for a child who has more than two and one-half diopters of anisometropia to develop binocular vision" (page 12). "The treatment of amblyopia in the anisometropic patient has a poor prognosis." Here one can only achieve satisfactory cosmetic alignment of the eyes" (page 13).

The author presupposes that the reader is familiar with many methods of examination.

Some of the surgical directions would seem to be unnecessary, unless intended for a first-year medical student, such as: "The initial incision should be made in a manner that will avoid cutting into one of the extraocular muscles; any cut in these muscles will result in a severe amount of bleeding."

The idea which apparently motivated the author to write this book, namely, to provide a simple, straightforward, short account of how to treat the commoner types of strabismus, is an excellent one and the general plan of the chapters is good but, even allowing for the somewhat slipshod and badly written script with its multiple mistakes in spelling, there are so many inaccurate statements that this little book cannot be seriously recommended.

I hope in a future edition that the author will see fit to tidy the whole thing up and really make a good job of it.


Nero may or may not have used his emerald as a magnifying glass, and certainly Kircher prescribed telescopic lenses based on the Galilean principle for reading in 1646, a principle to be much improved by Moritz von Rohr in 1808; but during recent years much new interest has been excited by the production of better and more adaptable optical systems to aid the poorly sighted. This book is a simple and easily readable summary of the present position of such aids for those with partial vision. The need is considerable, for it is estimated that in the United States today 2,000,000 persons are thus afflicted, of whom some 100,000 are children. The subject is fully covered and includes such expediences as magnifying glasses, telescopic spectacles, and contact lenses. The methods of visual examination are also discussed, the necessity of adequate illumination, and, most important, the adequate training and instruction of patients in the use of the appliance which suits them best. This latter could perhaps have received fuller stress for the limitations of visual aids are great, particularly when they are used for distant vision when walking about; even for reading many old people lack the intelligence and the perseverance to persist with them, partly because of the inherent difficulties in their case and partly because the tendency of the aged to sit without effort and dream of the long past is often greater.
Book Reviews


A review of this volume, the fifth of the *System* to be published, might be considered as falling within the dubious doctrine of works of supererogation. It is virtually certain that all those who possess Volumes I, II, III, and VII of the *System* which have already appeared will have placed standing orders with their booksellers, or will have hastened to order Volume VIII as soon as its publication was announced. This must include all serious students of ophthalmology and it may suffice to say that their faith is justified since this welcome instalment of the *System* lives up to the extraordinarily high standard of its predecessors in concept, literary merit, lucidity, and range of comprehension. The production, matching the contents, is well up to Henry Kimpton’s highest standards.

The division into two parts, essentially logical from a nosological view, will be welcome to those who like to read with a book on their knee and to those who dislike seeing a progressive disintegration inevitably induced by excessive size and weight. The Editor’s choice of collaborators is no doubt eclectic and therefore deservedly fortunate. A. G. Leigh is an acknowledged authority on diseases of the cornea, and his contributions to Part II of this volume are matched in style, presentation, and philosophy with the rest so well that the entire work reads as a harmonious whole.

No more need be said except that we look forward eagerly to further instalments of this monumental work.

**Trachoma and other Eye Diseases in Western New Guinea.** By H. C. P. M. SCHUBERT. 1964. Pp. 146, 26 tables, 39 figs, 95 refs. Royal Van Gorcum, Assen. (Hfl. 25)

The author introduces his studies of trachoma and other eye diseases in selected areas of West Irian (Western New Guinea) by giving an account of the geographical features and populations of the districts concerned. He then describes the methods which were used in his investigation of cases of trachoma and presents details of clinical and laboratory findings in the different districts; prevalence rates of the stages of trachoma in these districts are calculated and their relationship to age is represented graphically. The author bases the laboratory diagnosis of trachoma on the presence of initial body inclusions in conjunctival scrapings. It is surprising that, out of 182 scrapings which contained initial body inclusions, only 6 contained mature elementary body inclusions.

The results obtained in the various districts are discussed in relation to differences in host, environment, and TRIC agent strain. The conclusions are that climate, solar radiation, and exposure to sand and dust do not, but that social factors such as domestic overcrowding and poor hygiene do, influence the course of the disease.

Trachoma in West Irian is stated to be relatively benign, many cases being asymptomatic and the percentage of spontaneous cures without sequelae varying from 26 per cent. to 68 per cent.; it is suggested that in regions where the disease is endemic many of the less severe cases are not seen by clinicians, and that the concept of trachoma as a highly incapacitating disease, as has been emphasized in the past, is not strictly correct. The author considers that pannus is an important, but not an essential feature of trachoma. He postulates that a carrier state exists, on the basis of the observations of initial body inclusions in conjunctival scrapings in 9 out of 14 “practically normal” eyes, and one normal eye. This may not be universally accepted.

The other sections on eye diseases are concerned mainly with vitamin deficiencies, pterygium, and cataract, and include incidences, clinical descriptions, and conclusions in agreement with contemporary opinions, except that intensive solar radiation is suggested as an important factor in the aetiology of pterygium, and that sand and dust are regarded as factors of minor importance.

As the publication deals for the most part with trachoma, it is of interest and value to those working with this disease, especially with regard to field work in primitive conditions.

The editor of this volume, who has also written a considerable part of it, has taken advantage of the special knowledge of a number of other contributors to bring the literature on modern cataract surgery completely up to date. Fasanella is already known for his contributions to the practical literature on ophthalmic surgery, and this relatively small volume must augment his position in this field. The multiple authorship of the book in no way detracts from its continuity, and this in itself is a tribute to its editor.

Cataract surgery being an established procedure, it is interesting to find so much that is new in this book. Fungal infections, which have previously been vaguely recognized, are commented upon in relation to steroid therapy. The use of enzymatic zonulolysis in cataract extraction, of light coagulation in the treatment of complications, and the prevention of aphakic detachment, are dealt with by Barraquer, Meyer-Schwickerath, and Hopping respectively.

The use of low temperature instruments to facilitate intracapsular cataract surgery, which was introduced by Krwawicz, is appropriately dealt with in a chapter by this author.

With the adequate illustrations and the authoritative text, this book should provide both postgraduate students and experienced ophthalmologists with the most recent information on a very important aspect of ophthalmic surgery.


The author, as both a biochemist and a clinician, has produced a volume in which both aspects of cataract are considered, the biochemical in greater detail than the clinical.

Relatively brief chapters on the embryology and morphology of the lens, and on the classification and treatment of cataracts, are separated by the greater part of the book, in which lens regeneration and the chemistry and mechanisms of cataract formation receive detailed attention. This arrangement gives the subject matter a curious perspective, and whereas the reader seeking fairly detailed biochemical information will find it, the remaining sections are so abbreviated that a serious student would be better advised to consult a standard textbook.

The series of monographs, of which this book is one, has been written to emphasize the interdependence of chemistry and medicine, but in this particular instance the chemical aspects seem to lack cohesion with the clinical, and the reviewer feels that a purely biochemical treatise might have been more satisfactory, with a separate volume on the clinical aspects.


The first part of this report deals with technique and physiology; the second with physiology and pathology; and the third with the clinical application of electroretinography in diseases of the optic nerve, retina, choroid, in glaucoma, myopia, functional changes, and intoxications.

Stereoscopic Tables. (Stereoskopische Tafeln.) By R. Sachsenweger, Leipzig.

Sachsenweger has designed a set of 42 stereoscopic slides. They are for use with the normal stereoscope and are printed in black and white on cardboard and glazed for washing. They are only useful in patients with bi-foveal binocular vision who are without large degrees of strabismus or amblyopia.

Their use as treatment, therefore, is limited, but obviously must be of greater value in those countries where trained orthoptists and orthoptic departments do not exist. The symbols used are mainly children at play, animals, trees and plants with birds, and they are delightfully drawn.

Of interest is the use of retinal rivalry to produce a scintillating grey for some of the animals used as a centre of fixation. For those who still use stereoscopic slides as treatment this series will provide a useful and picturesque alternative to the sets already available.