
The title of this new French publication might lead the prospective reader to suppose that it would be little more than a catalogue of the causes of blindness in early childhood; it is, in fact, a comprehensive practical textbook of medical paediatric ophthalmology.

Following short introductory sections on genetics and the normal development of vision from early premature birth to the second year of life, there is an excellent chapter describing methods of clinical examination and special diagnostic procedures with an emphasis on the use of electrophysiological methods of investigation, especially in the elucidation of the cause of visual defects in the absence of gross ocular pathology. There are then sections devoted to the description of all those conditions, both hereditary and acquired, which may cause congenital or infantile blindness, and these are accompanied by a bibliography which is both up-to-date and comprehensive. Interspersed among accounts of disorders which have been well documented by other authors, are detailed descriptions of personal cases which do not easily fit into previously recorded categories. There are also several comprehensive tables analysing many series of cases which have been personally observed over years of practice. The very individual style of this book marks it as the work of widely-read authors with great practical personal experience and understanding of this subject.

In addition to surgical skills, the practice of paediatric ophthalmology requires some understanding of genetics, a wide knowledge of hereditary and congenital ocular disorders, a familiarity with all the objective methods of clinical examination which are applicable to the small child, and an understanding of the additional information which may be acquired from electro-physiological methods of investigation. This book is an excellent practical guide to all these aspects of the specialty and one must hope that it will not be too long before it can be read in the English language.


This second volume of Donaldson’s Atlas of External Diseases of the Eye maintains the high quality set by the first. The succinct descriptions of each condition are very good, overshadowed only by the excellence of the coloured stereoscopic slides or black and white photographs.

As with the first, this volume can be highly recommended for the student ophthalmologist, few of whom will be able to afford it.


Because of the increasing importance of genetics in modern medicine, and of the large number of genetically-determined disorders with ophthalmic manifestations, it was appropriate that in 1967 the New Orleans Academy of Ophthalmology should devote their symposium to the management of congenital anomalies of the eye. It was also appropriate to dedicate these Transactions to Prof. A. Franceschetti, one of the contributors to the symposium and one who had made outstanding contributions to medical genetics.

It was inevitable, in the present state of our knowledge of human genetics, that most of the eighteen papers presented at the symposium were concerned more with description and classification than with the management of congenital anomalies. It is a pity that some of the contributors did little more than present material available elsewhere. In spite of these criticisms this symposium is worth reading, particularly those sections concerned with the detection of the carrier state in autosomal