

Book reviews

Correction of Subnormal Vision. By N. BIER. 2nd ed., 1970. Pp. 287, figs, bibl. Butterworths, London. (£5.00)

The second edition of Norman Bier's "Correction of Subnormal Vision" will be welcomed by all those concerned in visual aid work. The book is a well-illustrated description of the different types of optical device available for the correction of subnormal vision. Ophthalmologists often tend to fight shy of this branch of the specialty, and they may find the technicalities a little difficult to comprehend as knowledge of the optical principles of many of the devices is often assumed in the text. Although the bibliography has been extensively revised and most of the modern visual aids are described, some of the discussion on the management of subnormal vision, particularly in children, is dated, and very little reference is made to the newer surgical techniques which are beginning to play an important part in the treatment of subnormal vision.

On Helping the Dyslexic Child. By T. R. MILES. 1970. Pp. 70. Methuen Educational Ltd., London. (£1.05)

This little book is designed to help the teacher of the dyslexic child and is not concerned with the neuro-ophthalmic aspects of the condition. Indeed, the author notes that poor vision is only occasionally a cause of poor reading.

The thesis of this book is that dyslexia is a form of word blindness, so that the look-and-say method of teaching to read is of little help. The alternative method is proposed of phonetic cues whereby individual letters are built up as sounds to complete words. The child must learn to say each simple sound carefully, paying attention to the movement of his lips, tongue, and throat. He is encouraged to write his own "dictionary" where words of similar sound are written together.

This is a practical approach to a very difficult problem. Professor Miles stresses that any attempt at treatment is better than none and this book may well help the inexperienced teacher, who may also be the parent.

Perception and its Disorders. Res. Publ. Ass. nerv. ment. Dis., Vol. 48. Edited by D. A. HAMBURG, K. H. PRIBRAM and A. J. STUNKARD. 1970. Pp. 405, 134 figs, refs. Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore; Livingstone, Edinburgh. (£10.00)

This book derives from the 1968 meeting of the Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Diseases when the topic selected was perception. All sensory modalities, including hunger and dreams, were considered, but the emphasis was mainly on vision. The visual papers range from the psychological aspects of perception, through animal experiments, to investigations of human disease. Much of the work described may well be unfamiliar to the ophthalmologist, as references to ophthalmic literature are sparse. Unlike many psychologically orientated publications, this work is not concerned with using sensory processes as tools but with the mechanism of these processes; the approach is defined in the second and third chapters on colour vision, one being a review of the basic mechanisms of colour vision and the other a convincing theory to account for the phenomenon of Benham's top.

It is unlikely that the clinician will feel constrained to add this book to his library, but it will amply repay reading. Furthermore, all the contributors have maintained a high level of readability so that even the inevitable abbreviations seem far less obtrusive. This is the 47th research publication of the Association and it fully maintains the very high standards established in previous years.