Book reviews


It is always interesting to compare foreign text-books with those produced in the United Kingdom, especially those designed for undergraduates, as the comparison may give us some idea of the relative standards of teaching in different countries. This is a small first-class volume from East Germany which stands up very favourably to its British counterparts. It combines the three attributes of clarity, brevity, and accuracy which are the hallmarks of a good text-book, and the general excellence of its illustrations make this a very special book indeed.

Designed primarily for medical students, but extending well into postgraduate fields, the book is logically divided into a number of sections dealing with the anatomy and pathological processes affecting the ocular tissues. Methods of examination are described in the appropriate chapters, and the authors make very good use of tables and illustrations. Theorization is reduced to a minimum and the whole emphasis of the book is on the practical assessment and management of ophthalmic conditions. East German medicine, of course, differs from Anglo-Saxon medicine and much of the recommended treatments have an alien sound, but in this context this is no criticism.

If this is what the medical students in Leipzig, Dresden, Rostok, and Berlin are encouraged to read, then it can do nothing but good to ophthalmic medicine in that country. With certain modifications related to methods of treatment, an English translation of this book would be a welcome addition to ophthalmic text-books.


This twenty-sixth volume in the series "Advances in Ophthalmology" is composed of articles on a wide variety of topics. Three are in English, two in French, and two in German.

The three English papers comprise a discussion by Huber on the clinical presentation, visual field defects, and x-ray diagnosis of orbital and intracranial lesions; a selective review by Redmond Smith of the last 10 years of glaucoma literature; and a paper by Wulle on the development of the productive and draining system of the aqueous humour in the human eye. All three articles set out to bring the reader up to date in their subjects, as the title of the volume suggests, and the paper by Huber has particular clinical value.

In the two French articles Betrix discusses the fluorescein angiographic appearance of retinal vascular anomalies, and Scouras, Dufour, and Thilges review 316 cases of intraocular foreign bodies and complications of removal, particularly secondary retinal detachment.

Both the German articles have a pathological basis. There is a long paper by Thiel on Meesmann's epithelial corneal dystrophy with a family study going back to 1620; the opening remarks on corneal dystrophies in general are followed by detailed descriptions of the individual members of this pedigree who have been examined. Finally, Lerche discusses the microscopic changes that occur in Bruch's membrane during the development of senile degeneration and correlates them with the clinical appearance. The histological structures of the different forms of drusen are described.


This volume gives an excellent description of the various tumours which are found in the eyelids and the globe. The sections on the eyelid include a large section on angioma; it is suggested that they are treated by various forms of irradiation. There is also a full description of pigmented tumours and suggestions for methods of treatment. There are many excellent photographs and those of the advanced epitheliomata of the eyelids are particularly impressive as are the results of their treatment by radiotherapy. Tumours of the conjunctiva are well described and their treatment is
fully covered. The various tumours of the ciliary body are described in great detail. Retinoblastoma is well described, and other retinal tumours are mentioned. Optic nerve tumours, both primary and secondary, are discussed and well illustrated. The investigation of tumours of the orbit and lacrimal apparatus is comprehensively described, and the treatment of the various types is indicated. The surgical treatment of orbital tumours is discussed in detail, the operation of orbital exenteration is described, and radiation treatment is reviewed.


Most clinical tests of visual function are used empirically, and generally only the visual acuity, the visual field, and colour vision are tested. Tests of binocular function are undertaken by the orthoptic department. There are other tests available but rarely used, such as dark adaptation, electrophysiological studies, and tests of dynamic visual function.

This book is an attempt to relate the clinical use of these tests to their physiological basis. The result is a book of uneven calibre but of unfailing interest. The contributors are actively engaged in research in the various fields, but their contributions maintain a firm clinical bias. References are numerous, but it is noticeable that when a particularly provocative statement is made the reference is to unpublished data.

Some of the substance of this book may be found in other publications, but the whole is a thought-provoking review of many of the methods that we clinicians tend to use uncritically.


The extensive experience of the authors in this field is evident throughout the volume. As an atlas it satisfactorily details the minutiae of surgical technique and its presentation and format are excellent. Many surgeons in Great Britain would hesitate to treat vitreous loss in the presence of lens damage, with lens extraction and anterior vitrectomy as a primary procedure, but this traditional caution may well be ill-judged as the authors suggest. The philosophy of the book reflects current opinion, providing a readable and coherent account that merits serious consideration by all concerned with the treatment of intraocular trauma. In these days of expensive specialist textbooks, a cheaper paperback edition might well increase its appeal to trained ophthalmologists.


This is a collection of contributions to the First International Symposium on the Lacrimal System. Chapters are devoted to congenital anomalies of the lacrimal system, disorders of the lacrimal gland, lacrimal canaliculi, and lacrimal sac, and the operative approach to treatment of such conditions.

Many authors review current concepts of treatment, and other chapters present new approaches to the understanding of lacrimal disorders. These include electron microscopy of lacrimal tumours and new studies of the anatomical factors to be taken into account in surgery of the lacrimal drainage system. The symposium offers a good résumé of current work in this field for the use of students and ophthalmic practitioners.


This book contains selected papers presented at the 1971 meeting of the Academy. Despite the high quality of the contributions, the justification for this expensive publication is questioned, as they will all be published in the Transactions of the American Academy.


This excellent publication reviews selected articles in the literature published in the previous year.