valuable, particularly in optics and mathematics, and was an essential prelude to the subsequent advances made by such workers as Newton. This volume provides delightful reading and is both critical and fully sympathetic; it is indispensable for anyone interested in the evolution of scientific thought, representing the first great step since the time of Aristotle.

P. D. TREVOR-ROPER


The Dutch school of nutritionists and ophthalmologists with a special interest in malnutrition and the eye has always been conspicuous in these fields. Dr Sauter's book is a particularly successful and comprehensive account of the subject. The illustrations including several pages of colour photographs are excellent. Particular attention has been paid to vital staining of the cornea and conjunctiva, the author concluding that lissamine green has advantages over other traditional stains.

The author's particular concern was to examine the thesis that in many African countries much of the blindness was caused by xerophthalmia precipitated by the 'catalyst' measles. His conclusions were that xerophthalmia occurred nearly everywhere in Kenya in 1974, which shows that xerophthalmia is prevalent in communities which do not have rice but where maize is eaten as the staple food; xerophthalmia appeared to be the main cause of blindness in Kenyan children; measles often played, by means of local and general 'catalysing' effects, an important role in the development of blindness caused by xerophthalmia; in well-nourished children measles was of no consequence as a cause of blindness; staining by 1 per cent rose bengal or 1 per cent lissamine green appeared to be an asset in the early diagnosis of xerophthalmia in health centres and in field surveys. Staining is therefore important in the prevention of severe blindness inducing vitamin A deficiency.

Later the author performed a short additional xerophthalmia investigation in Java, Indonesia, where he examined a small number of xerophthalmia patients and children with measles keratoconjunctivitis. The result of vital staining and the corneal biopsies of these two groups of patients were in accordance with the findings in the Kenyan counterparts.

This is a fine publication, in English with Dutch summaries, and with an excellent bibliography. It deserves to be, and probably will become, a classic in this most important field of nutritional ophthalmology.

D. P. CHOYCE

Notes

Cataract Surgical and IOL Congress

Miami Beach, 5 to 9 February 1977

The fifth biennial congress will be held at the Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida. There will be 70 speakers and approximately 200 papers which will be discussed by a faculty panel. Anyone wishing to present papers or films should write to the Programme Chairman, Robert C. Welsh, MD, 168 SE 1st Street, Miami, Florida 33131, USA.

Postgraduate Course in Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery

University of California, 3 to 4 March 1977

This postgraduate course at the University of California, San Francisco, will cost $150 (including lunches). Further information may be obtained from J. Earl Rathbun, MD, Programme Chairman, School of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco, USA.