

Book reviews

Aids to the Practice of Refraction. By ROBERT W. STEPHENSON. 1975. Pp. 24. Thornhill Press, Gloucester (65p)

The author intends this book for ophthalmologists. It is possibly best described as a booklet, and does not pretend to be a text on the subject. The trainee ophthalmologist inevitably finds he is required at an early stage in his career to do many quick refractions. These are often done without a background of proper theoretical or practical instruction. Later he is often forced by circumstances to do long stints of refraction, again in a hurried manner.

Thus the basis of refraction practice as an accurate diagnostic tool or its exact and correct relationship to an optical appliance is lost to the ophthalmologist. In these circumstances, the procedure becomes a bore and unrelated to the patient. This booklet raises pertinent aspects in an orderly fashion, essentially on the clinical management of patients seeking an eye examination. Since the 24 pages can be read almost at one sitting, it is sound advice that all those about to study refraction in greater depth should start with this simple outline.

MONTAGUE RUBEN

Colour Vision Test. By ROBERT J. FLETCHER. Keeler Instruments, London

The City University colour vision test has been produced by Professor Robert J. Fletcher from the Department of Ophthalmic Optics and Visual Sciences. It uses a series of selected paper colour samples, each page providing the opportunity for a normal response. The patient is asked to identify the normal 'spot' as resembling the centre spot more closely than other alternatives. The patient's choice is recorded for each page and this enables the examiner to quantify the depth of an inherited defect depending upon the number of mistakes made by the examinee. The book is smaller than the normal Ishihara chart and enclosed is a form for recording results. The test is simplicity itself if a few guide lines are followed and these are carefully explained in the introductory notes.

S. J. H. MILLER

Conference for the Prevention of Impaired Vision and Blindness, Paris 1974. (*Documenta Ophthalmologica Proceedings Series*, vol. 5). Edited by W. J. Holmes. 1975. Pp. 204, 158 figs, 52 tables. Junk, The Hague (DG65)

As blindness becomes increasingly a world problem it is essential that more efforts should be directed towards its prevention in the developing world. The scope of the problem is immense—20 million affected by onchocerciasis, 500 million affected by trachoma. The World Health Organization has now included the prevention of blindness in its activities and an International Association for the Prevention of Blindness has been formed. Its first meeting was at the International Congress

of Ophthalmology (Paris 1974) where public health ophthalmology was accepted as being a new dimension.

The contributors are principally ophthalmologists who include in their papers work from allied specialties like genetics. There are contributors from India, Pakistan, and south east Asia where blindness is rampant. There is an excellent article on homocystinuria by François, and two important articles, one from USA and one from Israel, on the prevention and treatment of hereditary eye disease. These growing points of our knowledge include prenatal diagnosis by amniocentesis and possible lines of treatment of certain metabolic diseases like Wilson's disease and homocystinuria. The book is worth obtaining for these articles alone. It concludes with several articles on the pathogenesis of retinal vein occlusion, although no one can suggest much in the way of prevention.

C. A. BROWN

Functional Examinations in Ophthalmology, Parts I and II (Fourth Congress of the European Society of Ophthalmology, Budapest, 1972). Edited by J. FRANÇOIS. 1974. Pp. 692, 343 figs, 47 tables, refs. Karger, Basel (£30-60)

In Part I virtually all methods, both objective and subjective, now available for the investigation of ocular function are dealt with. Emphasis is laid on the importance and use of such methods in research, and also in clinical diagnosis where, for example, it is often only possible to understand and classify the multitude of choroïdo-retinal infections after duly considering the combined results of such tests as visual acuity, static and dynamic perimetry, disturbances of colour vision, dark adaptation, and electrodiagnostic investigations.

Part II comprises free papers which in one way or another relate to the methods now available for the investigation of ocular function.

D. GREAVES

The History and Traditions of the Moorfields Eye Hospital, vol. II. By F. W. LAW. 1975. Pp. 299, 70 illustrations. Lewis, London (£4)

Moorfields is a unique hospital; the oldest and still probably one of the largest eye hospitals in the world, it has had a major influence on ophthalmology ever since it was founded in order to cope with the trachomatous soldiers returning from the Napoleonic wars. The history of Moorfields thus reflects the whole evolution of scientific ophthalmology from the simple empirical *nostra* of 1805 to its present complexity, against a colourful background of medical politics and personalities. The travails and triumphs of Moorfields up to the first world war had already been recorded by Treacher Collins in 1929, but only three copies of this admirable book have evidently survived. So, by a happy arrangement, facsimiles of this earlier book have now been published with Frank Law's second volume, bringing the story up to date—or rather up to 'yesterday', since it went to press just before our last Minister of

Health took office, with the sorry happenings that have followed in her wake.

Frank Law, who has been part of Moorfields ever since the first war (when he overlapped with Treacher Collins), helping, and still continuing to help, in so many capacities, was the obvious choice of author; and the book is clear, comprehensive, and indeed a model for the future historians of our great medical institutions.

It must have been a problem to furnish a record of so much change, to catalogue the evolution of all the new departments that have emerged, to give life to all those shadowy personalities that crowded on to the stage, particularly when in 1948 the Central London Ophthalmic Hospital was engulfed, the Institute started, and the 'Royal Westminster' at High Holborn united. Thereafter the changes and emergent departments in the last are decently appended (a résumé of the history of the Royal Westminster from 1816 to 1948 would have been a welcome addition to the record). And, above all, how difficult it must have been to condense that endless stream of minutes which formed the body of the record, with their depressing official jargon, their impersonal tones and passive tenses, their prolixity and stuffiness. One is grateful for the occasional anecdote and fleeting aside. Without them (and one longs for more) it would be rather like reading Bradshaw—an important record, but undeniably heavy going. Even so the biographical sketches of the main characters tend to read like the pious obituary notices from which many of his accounts were doubtless drawn. For they all emerge as virtuous, dedicated, and orthodox; even the unlikeliest of them seems to have started with athletic prowess in some sport, and they all progressed serenely through a succession of standard achievements to an honoured retirement. It is a credit to Law's artistry that in these he manages never to repeat himself.

Every now and then one regrets that the author, who is capable of writing with such spirit and satire, such whimsy and wit, has so muted the sound of artillery over those near-forgotten battles around the Royal College chair, the amalgamation, the birth of the Faculty and so on. He might just have hinted at the foibles and shortcomings of some of the staff now long dead. But he is grave and benevolent throughout—perhaps just as well—one must not look for fun in Leviticus.

P. D. TREVOR-ROPER

International Glaucoma Symposium, Albi 1974. Edited by R. ETIENNE and G. PATERSON. 1975. Pp. 501, fig, tables, refs. Diffusion Générale de Librairie, Marseille (£40)

This book represents the published proceedings of the International Glaucoma Symposium held in Albi in May 1974. In addition there are two extra chapters on the use of ultrasonography in glaucoma and pneumotonomography. It includes contributions from experts in this field and brings the reader up to date on glaucoma. The book is particularly interesting because the discussions are published in full. It is well produced with high quality illustrations including a set of stereophotographs of the optic disc and should prove a useful addition to all ophthalmic libraries.

S. J. H. MILLER

Modern Approaches to the Diagnosis and Instruction of Multihandicapped Children, vol. 13. Eye Movements, Surprise Reactions, and Cognitive Development. By R. M. WILTON and F. J. BOERSMA. 1974. Pp. 69, 2 figs, 6 tables, refs. University Press, Rotterdam (DG29'90)

This is not a book for the general ophthalmologist and it will be of limited interest only to those in the speciality who study the link between recorded eye movements and visual perception. Even so the objectives outlined, namely whether training can accelerate intellectual development and if retarded children differ from normal children in this respect, have little ophthalmological content.

The acceptance by the authors that corneally reflected eye movements in children can be used experimentally as an index of 'perceptual activity' might surprise those of us who deal with children. Educationalists are in a better position than ophthalmologists to judge the value of the main conclusions. These are that the development of intelligence can be accelerated in normal children by training and that visual searching of pictorial material increases with age and/or mental development. These conclusions are supported by no fewer than 11 pages of statistics.

P. A. GARDINER

Modern Problems in Ophthalmology: New Research on the Aetiology and Surgery of Retinal Detachment. By L. GUILLAUMAUT, M. MASSIN, and L. FISON. 1975. Pp. 138, 150 figs, 55 tables. Karger, Basel (DM145)

This book reports the ninth meeting of the proceedings of the Club Jules Gonin which was held in La Baule, France, in 1974. The book is mainly in English but contains some contributions in French and German. The many subjects dealt with included genetics in retinal detachment, the terminology and nature of peripheral retinal degeneration, the non-drainage of subretinal fluid in retinal detachment surgery, and recent advances in vitreous surgery. There were also contributions on photocoagulation. Of particular interest was the work performed by the Miami group on the pathogenesis of intraocular fibrous tissue.

The book is beautifully produced and the illustrations are of high quality. It gives a thoroughly up-to-date account of progress in the management of diseases of the retina and is recommended to ophthalmologists with a special interest in this subject, although all ophthalmologists will find it of value as a source of reference.

A. H. CHIGNELL

Modern Problems in Ophthalmology, vol. 12. Limitations and Prospects for Retinal Surgery. Edited by E. NORTON, R. DUFOUR, C. GAILLOUD, R. KLOTI, and L. FISON. 1974. Pp. 598, 192 figs, 143 tables. Karger, Basel (£25'40)

This volume is a report of the eighth meeting of the Club Jules Gonin held in Miami in 1972.

The main subject was the cause of failure in dealing with detachments of the retina. Several papers dealt with aspects of basic research and experimental work