Book reviews

Advances in Ophthalmology, vol. 32. Edited by E. B. STRIEFF. 1976. Pp. 203, 52 figs, 28 tables, refs. Karger, Basel (\$49.25)

Like several of its predecessors in this series, this book comprises a collection of articles on a variety of subjects. Three papers deal with contact lenses: Aquavella reviews the present role of hydrophilic lenses and provides a comprehensive list of references; there is a short paper by Enoch on the use of soft lenses, together with a list of inverted telescope units used in the correction of unioocular aphakia. The third is a longer paper by Gernet on the value of combined contact lens correction for unilateral aphakia which has advantages over the more conventional type of aphakic correction, and the optical principles underlying this type of lens prescription are dealt with in depth.

There is an interesting article by Tenner demonstrating the value of fluorescein angiography in the study of the glaucomatous optic disc, although the author concedes that the technique is not suited to routine diagnosis.

In the remaining two papers there is a discussion on pneumatonography by Langham, Leydhecker, and their associates as part of a collaborative study between centres in Baltimore and Wurzburg. The studies investigated postural changes in intraocular pressures which show significant differences in normal and glaucomatous eyes.

The last article by Zingirian discusses ocular pemphigus with several case presentations describing the disease and its treatment.

The criticism that has been levelled against this series still applies. Although there is no question of the high standard of the individual contributions, particularly in this volume, each subject is very specialized and therefore the book is likely to have only a limited appeal. Sadly also, the fact that three of the six articles are in German, restricts the amount of information that can be derived by the average English-speaking ophthalmologist.

T. J. FFYTCH

Advances in Uveal Surgery, Vitreous Surgery, and the Treatment of Endophthalmitis. By G. A. PEYMAN, D. R. SANDERS, and M. F. GOLDBERG. 1975. Pp. 238, figs, tables, refs. Appleton Century-Croft, New York (No price given)

At a time when a number of instruments have become available for vitreous surgery and the development of this method of treatment is being actively pursued, it is of particular interest that a book should be published in which a large section is devoted to vitreous surgery, including a description of the use of an instrument developed by one of the authors.

The chapters on uveal and vitreous surgery start with a short consideration of the anatomy of the respective structures and with a discussion of the diseases. In

considering uveal surgery attention is largely devoted to management of malignant melanomata of the iris, ciliary body, and choroid. Modern techniques of conservative treatment are fully discussed. In the chapter on vitrectomy the use of the vitrophage for lensectomy and in the treatment of vitreous disease is considered in sufficient detail to provide the reader with adequate practical information about the techniques.

The last section is devoted to the treatment of endophthalmitis. Several antibiotics are described and the more important ones are discussed with particular reference to their effectiveness when given by the intravitreal route. The duration of their activity and possible toxic effects are also discussed. This chapter is particularly valuable for the detailed manner in which each drug is considered. The technique of intravitreal injection, an important factor in avoiding adverse effects, is fully described.

Each section of the book includes a full and up-to-date list of references. The text is well illustrated and the pictures have excellent captions.

This is a book which is written by authors who have practical experience in the fields of which they write. It should make equally helpful reading for both the postgraduate student and the practising consultant.

JAMES R. HUDSON

The Changing Status of the Blind from Separation to Integration. By B. LOWENFELD. 1975. Pp. 336, figs, tables. Thomas, Springfield (\$23.50)

This book traces the care of the blind from earliest times to the present day. Among primitive peoples, the blind, like other physically handicapped persons, were often killed. Many famous people in early times were blind, including Homer, but a large proportion of blind persons had to sustain themselves by begging. In early Christian times blindness was regarded as a punishment for some misdemeanour and was in fact inflicted as a punitive measure in some cases. The family looked after their blind persons. The Jewish people always tried to mitigate the bitter fate of the blind. During the Middle Ages hospitals for the blind were opened in Europe and some public responsibility for their care became manifest. In the seventeenth century some blind individuals acquired education and showed outstanding achievements in various fields of endeavour. Provision of work for the blind came to be recognized as necessary and there was some advance in the means of communication among the blind. The first school for blind children was founded in 1784 by Valentin Härg. Raised print was introduced and was useful in teaching, and this school prepared blind children for employment. The introduction of an embossed dot alphabet by Louis Braille was a great advance. Many new schools for the blind were opened in the early nineteenth century.

The next stage evolved as a recognition that blind

people must be given equal opportunities to those of the sighted, and it is contended that this has now been achieved in the United States of America. In about 1830 three private schools for the blind were opened in the United States, and in general these followed the pattern of those already working in Europe. The first director of the Perkins Institution in Boston was Samuel Gridley Howe who did much to integrate the blind into the life of the general population. He was responsible a few years later for the opening of the first state school for the blind in Columbus, Ohio. Craft training was very important in these early blind schools, and has continued to be an essential part of blind training. Some blind people lived and worked in blind institutions and finished their lives in homes for the aged blind. As time passed the blind were encouraged to live and work independently and not only by handicrafts. The importance of a family life for the blind is now receiving great attention.

A. G. CROSS

Diagnostic Ultrasonics: Principles and Uses of Instruments. By W. N. MCDICKEN. 1976. Pp. 320, figs, tables, refs. Granada Publishing, St Albans (£15)

Although Dr McDicken is a hospital physicist he is accustomed to teaching doctors and radiographers and his book is designed to meet the needs of a similar readership. Two radiologists taking up ultrasonic work vouch for the suitability of the book for beginners.

Only a small proportion of the book is relevant to ophthalmology and the eight entries in the index under eye refer to very superficial accounts, apart from a paragraph on transducers in eye work.

With the increasing acceptance of ultrasonic diagnosis a book of this type is very suitable for hospital libraries and ophthalmologists should support its purchase. For their own use, however, their money would be better spent on one of the books on ultrasonography in ophthalmology.

DOUGLAS GORDON

Essentials of Clinical Neuro-Ophthalmology. By A. H. WOLINTZ. 1976. Pp. 198, figs, tables, refs. Little Brown, Boston (\$12.50)

The aim of this book is to introduce the commoner neuro-ophthalmological problems to ophthalmologists, neurologists, and neurosurgeons who are beginning their specialty training; as such it succeeds admirably. Any book of this type is bound to be incomplete in detail although the author overcomes this by the liberal use of lists, some of the contents of which may not be included in the text. The bias of several sections is unduly weighted by this incompleteness—for example, chiasmal lesion is the only cause for changes in refraction mentioned.

The layout of the book is good but the construction of each chapter and section is often not completely clear mainly because of the large amount of information that the author succeeds in including. The few diagrams are clear, and there is a carefully selected bibliography for those whose enthusiasm has been excited by this useful and concise book.

DAVID TAYLOR

Handbook of Perception, vol. V, Seeing. Edited by E. C. CARTERETTE and M. P. FRIEDMAN. 1975. Pp. 527, figs, tables, refs. Academic Press, London and New York (\$28.50)

This book on visual perception is part of a multi-volume treatise concerning human perception. It is written mainly for psychologists and perhaps natural scientists in general. Contributions to ophthalmology appear to be negligible. Altogether 11 authors have contributed 12 chapters on subjects ranging from the history and contemporary theoretical problems of research into seeing to painting and photography, sandwiching the measurement of visual stimulus, the neural basis of seeing, temporal and spatial resolution, and the perception of pattern, colour, space, and motion.

The arrangement and the choice of the chapters throughout the book is somewhat arbitrary and there is no synchronized theme running through the different chapters dealing with similar and related subjects. For example, the chapter by J. G. Robson dealing with the receptive fields of cells in the visual nervous system consists of a somewhat dogmatic review of the literature and the visual system is viewed as a spatial frequency analyser with modest capabilities. This is completely divorced from the chapter by J. P. Thomas dealing with the psychophysics of spatial resolution in human subjects with attempts to interpret this in terms of the receptive field organization of cells in the nervous system. Similarly, the chapter by R. L. and K. K. De Valois provides a comprehensive review of studies on the behaviour of colour-coded cells in the visual system and its relationship to the psychophysics of colour vision, but is completely divorced from the chapter by R. M. Boynton which deals with the physical, psychological, and physiological basis of colour, hues, and wavelengths.

The chapters dealing with temporal factors by L. Ganz, spatial factors by J. Thomas, three-dimensional depth and space factors in seeing by W. Richards, and also somewhat abstruse phenomena of pattern and object perception such as 'perceptual constancies' and 'illusions' by P. C. Dodwell take a basically bioengineering approach to these subjects.

The chapter on the measurement of the visual stimulus by Y. Le Grand includes much theoretical detail of the physics of light and radiometric concepts but fails to give more practical information about different types of visual stimuli and the methods of measurement required in research on seeing.

The chapter by P. C. Dodwell on contemporary theoretical problems comes to terms with the fact that there is still a wide gap between our understanding of perception and our ever increasing knowledge about the neurophysiology of the visual system. This view is shared by the authors of some of the other chapters. However, the present impetus to research on seeing appears to be coming from recent neurophysiological studies of the nervous system as is evident from the fact that practically all the chapters attempt to correlate perceptual phenomena with recent neurophysiological data. An excellent example is the chapter by R. Sekular on visual motion perception which emphasizes the recent neurophysiological evidence on the parallel processing of spatial details and temporal factors by