Book reviews


All self-respecting plastic surgeons have a method of their own for tackling problems in reconstruction, and though the hairs of their heads may be numbered it is unlikely that the same can be said for their permutations and combinations. For the ophthalmic surgeon there is therefore a crying need for a simple book clearly written and illustrated describing well-tried plastic procedures for conditions affecting the eyes and their adnexa. This book is just such a treatise, consisting of 200 pages liberally illustrated with photographs and backed up by excellent line diagrams. The authors are fortunate in having the support of the classical work of Lester Jones and Margaret Obear. It is a text to be read and kept for reference. Like the A to Z street-plan of London or the map of the underground subway, the reader should keep it handy when about to explore fresh territory or revisit a half-forgotten area.

The titles of the chapters give an adequate prospectus of the ground covered—Anatomy and Physiology, Basic Principles, Preoperative Evaluation, Tumour Evaluation, Eyelid Reconstruction, Surgery of the Canthus, Blepharoptosis, Malpositions of the Eyelids (Entropion and Ectropion), Blepharoplasty, Lachrymal System, Conjunctival Surgery, and The Orbit (Enophthalmos, Exophthalmos, Orbital Fractures, Exenteration).

STEPHEN MILLER


This book—"Eugene Wolff’s Anatomy of the Eye and Orbit"—or to add its full title—"including the central connections, development and comparative anatomy of the visual apparatus"—was written originally in 1933. It rapidly became established as the standard work on the anatomy of the eye and its related structures with a world-wide circulation, and it is interesting that the author was an ophthalmic surgeon who built up a large and successful consulting practice in London. Apart from his hospital commitments, he was able to find time to make many original contributions in the fields of ocular anatomy and pathology and also in clinical ophthalmology, quite apart from the production of several textbooks.

The seventh edition of this treatise has been produced by Professor Roger Warwick, who is an anatomist of renown, and it is indeed fortunate that he has combined his interest in anatomy as a whole with a deep interest in certain aspects of ocular anatomy, particularly the complex distribution of the motor centres of the extrinsic ocular muscles in the brain stem. It is obvious that any book which has reached its seventh edition in just over 40 years must have increased in size and also altered in content, and though anatomy might be regarded as a fairly established subject it is interesting that about a quarter of the text has had to be rewritten since the previous edition was produced in 1968. It is interesting also, however, that many parts of the original text have been retained, with the beautiful illustrative drawings of the anatomical artist of renown, A. K. Maxwell. It seems perhaps a pity that there is no mention of the great contribution which was made by Professor R. J. Last in keeping the book alive with the production of the sixth edition after the untimely death of Eugene Wolff some years previously.

There can be very few criticisms of a book of this kind which has been written and maintained with scrupulous care over the years. It is a pity that the method of demonstrating the position of the eye in the orbit is limited to the injection of a saturated solution of lead nitrate into the eye, which is applicable only to the cadaver, whereas ultrasonography or the EMI scan can provide an accurate measurement in the living, as well as in the dead, state. There is no mention of Egger’s line (the presumed circular line of attachment between the anterior vitreous face and the posterior lens capsule), which is perhaps a matter of anatomical debate, but it is of considerable importance in the management of congenital cataract, and clinical experience endorses the view that some form of tenuous attachment is a normal feature which becomes accentuated in certain pathological states. The description of the actions of the superior and inferior obliques is rather stereotyped and takes no account of the wide variations which the tendons of the superior oblique and the inferior oblique must make with the vertical meridian and which have a great clinical importance.

This book should be compulsory reading for any young person who is embarking on a career in ophthalmology, because a sound clinical knowledge must be built up on a firm background knowledge of the basic sciences. It should perhaps also be an essential item in the library of established ophthalmic surgeons.

KENNETH WYBAR


Volume 15 of System of Ophthalmology is divided into three parts. Part 1 is a summary of systemic ophthalmology occupying 180 pages. It includes systemic, neurological, and dermatological diseases and syndromes with ophthalmological implications. References for each syndrome are given to the volume and page number of the System, and where important contributions have been made since the earlier volumes were published reference to these contributions has been appended. Part 2 is a small section giving an index of those who have contributed greatly to ophthalmology and whose biographies are illustrated elsewhere. The last

A symposium was held in San Francisco on 16-17 September 1974 to discuss the result of studies on antiviral activity of adenine arabinoside (ara-A). This book provides an authoritative summary of the information presented in that meeting.

The book is divided into 3 sections—preclinical, parenteral, and ophthalmic. The preclinical section presents papers describing the result of work on the antiviral activity of ara-A in cell cultures and in animals, and on the safety of the drug for parenteral and topical use. The parenteral section describes studies, still under way, to establish the effectiveness of ara-A in systemic and life-threatening viral infections. The ophthalmic section presents the results of extensive studies on the intraocular penetration of ara-A and of its efficacy against simple and complicated herpetic keratitis in comparison with idoxuridine and trifluorothymidine. The studies indicate that a new compound ara-A is as effective as IDU in treating herpetic keratitis, and gives evidence of the activity of this drug in a wide variety of other DNA virus-induced diseases.

This book is highly recommended to all ophthalmologists.


The author is clearly an expert in this particular field of pathology. His book is very readable and is profusely illustrated by both clinical and pathological photographs, but its title is somewhat misleading, because the author has included descriptions of benign melanotic tumours of the skin.

The book is composed of 12 chapters which deal in turn with pigmented naevi, their malignant potential, melanoma, spontaneous regression in these tumours, multiple primary cutaneous melanomas, their metastases, their prognostic features, their diagnosis by frozen section, the doubtful cases, the surgical approach, ocular melanoma, and problems concerning melanotic tumours in children. The problems of diagnosis of pigmented tumours are fully discussed.

There is an interesting account of Hutchinson's melanotic freckle, a lesion which may be difficult to differentiate from the well-known superficial spreading type of melanoma. The most important feature that distinguishes the two lesions is the presence of advanced solar degeneration of the skin in the former. Apart from the rare malignant blue naevus, the author recognises 3 main histogenetic patterns of development regardless of the presence or absence of a pre-existing naevus. He divides melanomas into 3 groups: invasive melanoma, with adjacent intraepidermal component of Hutchinson's melanotic freckle; invasive melanoma, with adjacent intraepidermal component of superficial spreading type; and invasive melanoma, without an intrapapillary component. The importance of recognising these 3 categories lies in the fact that each has a different prognosis, being worse when there is no evidence of an intraepithelial component. The author's classification is based on the work of Clark (1967), an international meeting of pathologists (1972), and on his own experience. In contrast to his classification of skin melanoma a recent meeting of pathologists at the World Health Organisation in Geneva reclassified tumours of the eye and its adnexa and divided melanoma of the skin of the eyelid into 4 recognisable histological types: melanoma arising in junctional or compound naevi, melanoma arising in blue naevi or cellular blue naevi, melanoma arising in intraepithelial melanosis, and melanoma of indeterminate nature.

The author has also discussed the relation between the prognosis of melanomata of the skin and the number of mitotic figures, the depth of tumour invasion, and the presence of a polypoidal structure. The prognosis is worse with increasing mitosis, depth of invasion, and width of the polypoid pattern. On the other hand the presence of a continuous band of lymphocytes beneath the melanoma is usually an indication of spontaneous regression.

There is a short chapter on ocular melanomas, but it is impossible to cover this field adequately in a few pages. Some of the illustrations of choroidal melanomata are poor, and his assertion that the usual treatment of choice for conjunctival melanomata should be excision of the orbit will be severely criticised by ophthalmic surgeons who reserve this form of treatment for only a small percentage of cases, including those in which the melanoma has recurred and has invaded the orbit.

The author is to be congratulated on writing such an excellent treatise on melanotic tumours, and this book is highly recommended to all histopathologists.


The ophthalmic assistant, for whom this book is written, is the clinic or consulting room assistant who may have had no formal training but who needs a knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and optics as well as practical information on clinical methods, eye diseases, and medical and surgical treatment.

There are chapters on running the appointments office, spectacles, minor surgery, and hospital practice.