

Book reviews

Clinical Refraction and Visual Science. J. R. LEVENE. 1977. Pp. 346, figs., tables, refs. Butterworth, London (£12.50)

This small book consists of 12 chapters which are in fact historical essays on various topics of clinical refraction and visual science. The first deals with Dr William Porterfield (1696–1771). Others follow on ocular refractive errors, accommodation, bifocals, trifocals, night myopia, astigmatism, and finally the contact lens. Each essay gives evidence of considerable scholarship and first-rate library work, combined with a style that shows the author has an intense and loving interest in the subject. The book will provide a useful source of reference for all scholars interested in the history of clinical optics. If a further edition is called for, I would advise that the title be changed to 'Historical Essays in Clinical Refraction', otherwise this work will not obtain the selective readership it so readily deserves. MONTAGUE RUBEN

Atlas of Diseases of the Anterior Segment of the Eye. Vol. 5. The Crystalline Lens. DAVID D. DONALDSON. Pp. 209, 129 figs., 112 stereo views. Kimpton, London (£44.30)

Although this is an expensive book and as such beyond the reach of many ophthalmic students, it is a splendid book. It is written with a rare clarity, and in most instances its accounts of abnormalities of the lens are comprehensive. Very occasionally descriptions of the lenticular changes lack exact information indicating the positioning of the lens opacities and their colour.

The book begins with the anatomy and embryology of the crystalline lens and then passes on to congenital anomalies before discussing presenile disorders, cataracts in systemic changes, traumatic cataracts, and irradiational and toxic cataracts. Finally, surgical complications are adequately covered. With most disorders a simple and explicit description precedes one or two individual case histories, which are supplementary though tedious to read through. Abundant monochromatic illustrations are present throughout the book and are of excellent quality. I. M. DUGUID

Leukaemia and Lymphoma in the Nervous System. CARL POCHEDLY. 1977. Pp. 229, 12 figs., 11 tables. Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Illinois (\$23.50)

This book has a little over 200 pages which are intended to contain an 'in depth view' of clinically relevant aspects of a therapeutic field which is rapidly increasing. It is obviously not intended for ophthalmologists, as its coverage of leukaemic involvement of the eye consists of 3 pages of text, and this despite the fact that 9% of children with acute leukaemia may have eye involvement. The eye photographs would not find a place in any ophthalmologist's collection. Although generally comprehensive,

the book's lack of any mention of central nervous system afflictions indirectly associated with leukaemia, such as progressive multifocal encephalopathy and measles encephalitis, is regrettable. Many of the diagrams and most of the cytology photographs seem useful only in their ability to break up the text. The rest of the book is of some value, and the comprehensive and up-to-date references at the end of each chapter together with an excellent name and subject index will be of particular interest to paediatricians. DAVID TAYLOR

Diabetic Retinopathy. A. URRETS-ZAVALIA. 1977. Pp. 125, figs., refs. Masson, Paris (no price given)

This is a very full and thoughtful monograph covering all aspects of diabetic retinopathy written by a worker with some 20 years' experience in this field. The work starts with a general account of the prevalence of diabetic retinopathy and a review of the published figures of its incidence and its importance as a cause of visual disability and blindness. This is followed by 2 chapters dealing with the individual fundus signs, clinical types, and natural course of the disease. The vascular changes and the formation of exudates are clearly described and compared with the corresponding fluorescein angiograms. The classification which results is conventional. The disease is divided into simple and proliferative forms and subdivided into well-recognisable clinical types. This is helpful from the viewpoint of the indication for treatment, but it is stressed that the signs and combinations of signs are diverse and do not necessarily follow any definite sequence, a fact that many authors have overlooked.

The most important sections of the book are those on treatment of the various forms of retinopathy. On the medical side clofibrate and a diet low in animal fat are advocated for maturity onset exudative maculopathy, and calcium dobesilate (Doxium) is reported on with more enthusiasm than is its usual lot. Pituitary ablation 'constitutes a legitimate and effective procedure when performed in young subjects without nephropathy and without serious circulatory disturbances'.

About a third of the whole book is devoted to photocoagulation and there are many excellent photographs showing argon laser and xenon arc techniques in use in many different situations. Most of the methods employed and the dosage used follow orthodox lines, but there are some thought-provoking ideas such as ablating the retroequatorial part of the retina in the treatment of disc new vessels. There is a good section on the indications for vitrectomy and the use of ultrasound in the selection of cases. There is an extensive and well selected bibliography.

This book has come at a time when the American and British controlled trials have indicated the effectiveness of photocoagulation and the need to screen and treat the