Book reviews


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


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 prenecile 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


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


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
eyes of the growing diabetic population. It is a first-class exposition of the indications and methods of treatment available, is concisely written, and is well illustrated—a "must" for any departmental library or an individual working in this difficult subspecialty. J. H. DOBREE


This book, based on a symposium held in April 1974, contains sections on most aspects of the psychophysics and physiology of eye movements and their role in the visual system and in perception. It is regrettable that this field has been somewhat overlooked by ophthalmologists because it encompasses a wide range of phenomena that not only are immensely interesting but also form a basis for the diagnosis of organic disease often mistaken as functional. The first chapter, in five sections, describes the physiology of eye movement control as understood in 1974, and there is a chapter on techniques of recording and measuring eye movements. The other five chapters relate eye movements to the maintenance of vision, to visual perception, detection, and scanning, and to reading and higher mental processes. There are inevitably some gaps in the area covered, but the individual chapters, many of which are written by distinguished investigators, are coherent and interesting. Although several other books published in the last few years have covered this subject, this one is particularly well laid out and carefully edited. It will appeal not only to physiologists interested in vision and eye movement but also to a few clinicians continuing to widen their education. D. TAYLOR


Eye movement laboratories, with equipment and staff of varying quality, are being set up not only in major centres but, in some countries, even in small private practices, causing onlookers to speculate on the reasoning behind this expansion. That there is need for a concise text for clinicians and the technicians on the recording of eye movements is not in doubt. Although this book does not completely fulfil the need, it comes some way towards doing so. The author, who undoubtedly has a wide experience of electronystagmography, provides the reader with an extensive bibliography mainly derived from the ENT literature. This bias in his experience is reflected in the frequent use of unfamiliar terms such as 'nystagmus—ex-anopsia' and 'nystagmus—ex-amblyopia'.

After a discussion of historical and technical aspects of electronystagmography the author gives guidelines for the clinical evaluation of nystagmus and the interpretation of eye movement records. There then follows an atlas containing about 40 case records from the 10 000 that he has compiled over the 10 years to 1973. Many of these cases illustrate the clinical usefulness of electronystagmography and others illustrate how the technique contributes to the understanding of the pathophysiology. The records, unfortunately, are often not entirely clear and would have perhaps benefited from a certain amount of editing, though it is rather refreshing to see eye movement records published without being touched up either by computer or by hand. The book may appeal to some ophthalmologists but will more probably find a home in the library of ENT practitioners and institutions. D. TAYLOR


This volume of 'The Ophthalmologist' is the fourth of a comprehensive series on ophthalmological subjects. It comprises four sections on uveal disease, sympathetic ophthalmitis, ophthalmology applied to driving and road traffic (Verkehrsophthalmologie), and neuroophthalmology. Each section is almost a book in itself, with a different author and extensive references. The chapters on uveal disease and neuroophthalmology, with concise texts and clear illustrations, are highly recommended for postgraduates, though one would have preferred to see more fundus photographs rather than drawings in the former. Sympathetic ophthalmitis is now a very uncommon disease, and the chapter on it is largely historical. The discussion on traffic medicine and its ophthalmological significance is long and detailed, and one becomes aware that this subject, which assumes a great importance in European, particularly German, ophthalmology, receives only brief attention in English postgraduate training. T. J. FFYTCH

Notes

Glaucoma Congress

Miami Beach, Florida, 28 January–3 February 1978

The Second International Glaucoma Congress will be held in conjunction with the 13th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Contemporary Ophthalmology at the Americana Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida, USA. For information write to the Secretary, ASCO, 6 North Michigan, Chicago, Illinois 60602, USA.