

Book reviews

Recent Advances in Glaucoma. International Glaucoma Symposium, Prague 1976. Edited by S. RĚHÁK, M. M. KRASNOV, and GILLIAN D. PATTERSON. 1977. Pp. 295, figs., tables, refs. Springer-Verlag, Berlin (DM78)

This text of 285 pages is a carefully-edited account of the Prague Glaucoma Symposium of 1976. The material, which is divided into 7 chapters, includes papers on haemodynamics, aqueous dynamics, nerve head circulation, surgical prognosis, screening, ocular hypertension, and the laser. There are many papers of great interest from acknowledged masters in the various fields, but these are interspersed with others of less high quality. This is only to be expected in view of the nature of the publication, which is not an integrated textbook but a collection of papers.

Some of the papers are of particular interest and contain fundamental statements of great importance. For example (page 9), Weigelin and Salminen state, 'No conclusive clue can be found in the extensive literature to any relation between perfusion pressure and the prognosis of an individual case of glaucoma'. Their paper alone, which is a masterpiece of close reasoning, would make the book worthwhile and is a worthy introduction to the wealth of material that follows.

This is not a book for the beginner or casual reader, but it is a fascinating document to true enthusiasts on its subject.

REDMOND J. H. SMITH

Vertebrate Photoreception. Edited by H. B. BARLOW and P. FATT. 1977. Pp. 379, figs., refs. Academic Press, London (£14.80)

This book consists of 20 short chapters written by the participants at a symposium sponsored by the Rank Prize Funds in 1976. A dozen chapters are concerned with the electrophysiology of receptor cells, a subject which has received intensive investigation since the technique was pioneered by Tomita in the early 1960s. The volume, power, and quality of work currently in progress make it likely that visual transduction in vertebrate photoreceptors will be a solved problem in biophysical terms in a couple of decades. Other chapters are concerned with photochemistry, the molecular structure of the disc membrane, quantum efficiency, and visual noise.

This is a well-produced book, containing a number of useful summary chapters, each with a short bibliography. It provides a useful text for libraries of visual science and will be of value to advanced undergraduate students. It will be of interest to compare this book with a successor volume produced in 10 years' time. Perhaps by then the elusive 'internal transmitter' (which links primary photosensitive events in the disc to the outer segment permeability changes) will have been identified, and the nature and number of the membrane conductance changes will be understood.

A. L. HOLDEN

Augenchirurgie. By GEORG EISNER. 1978. Pp. 184, figs., tables. Springer-Verlag, New York (DM120)

Few surgical textbooks set out to describe the basic principles of operative techniques. Rather they tend to concentrate on surgical methods and the anatomy of operations. This volume by Eisner describes in detail the mechanics of instruments and how the design influences their action. The common ophthalmic operations are discussed on this basis, and the student embarking on a career in ophthalmic surgery will be able to learn step by step the principles of surgery ranging from incision techniques and suturing to the finer points of cataract extraction and corneal grafting.

A slight criticism could be that the author tends to make too much of a science out of what is regarded by most as an art, but the book is highly recommended for all beginners in ophthalmic surgery and will make useful reading for surgeons and operating nurses alike. An English translation would be most welcome.

T. J. FFYTCH

Fehler bei Untersuchungsmethoden Diagnostische Irrtümer. 49. Versammlung der Vereinigung Rhein-Mainischer Argenärzte. By HERAUSGEGEBEN VON WOLFGANG STRAUB and OTTO REMLER. 1978. Pp. 198, figs., refs., tables. Ferdinand Enke Verlag, Stuttgart (DM49)

The subject of 'diagnostic errors' was discussed at an ophthalmic meeting in Marburg in 1976, and the encouraging response to the content and presentation of the subject stimulated the publication of this interesting volume. The book is a natural epilogue to any comprehensive ophthalmic review because it contains examples of the common and less common mistakes in ophthalmic diagnosis, and as much can be learned from these as from any other demonstration.

A total of 33 short articles by different authors are presented covering a wide range of ophthalmic topics viewed from this novel angle. Some of the papers are anecdotal, but many deal with fundamental diagnostic problems, and there is much to be derived from their study. Pathological as well as clinical mistakes are discussed, and all articles are thoughtfully provided with a short English summary. This book of ophthalmic cautionary tales will make pleasant reading for a few evenings for all ophthalmologists who can learn from other people's mistakes.

T. J. FFYTCH

Textbook of Ophthalmology. 9th edn. Edited by HAROLD G. SCHEIE and DANIEL M. ALBERT. 1977. Pp. 616, figs., tables, refs. Saunders, London (£19.50)

This is the ninth edition of Sanford Gifford's *Textbook of Ophthalmology*. It was first published in 1938 with the intention of providing a book that would be useful to medical students and general physicians. It is important at the outset to realise that the book is not intended for specialist ophthalmologists but rather as a reference book on diseases of the eye in its relationship to general disease.

The 2 editors and 8 other contributors have combined