

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

to produce a work which faithfully fulfils Gifford's original purpose and gives excellent accounts of the more recent diagnostic procedures, such as ultrasound and fluorescein angiography, together with informative sections on the basic sciences in ophthalmoscopy, pharmacology, and genetics. The great strength of the book, however, lies in its medical ophthalmology chapters, and there is a wealth of information on some of the rarer diseases and little-known syndromes of childhood. Numerous tables provide diagnostic data, and at the end of each chapter are a number of key references. The illustrations are in the main excellent, though some of the smaller colour pictures lack definition.

Though he will find a clear exposition of glaucoma, the younger specialist ophthalmologist will have to turn to other textbooks for detailed accounts of more local eye conditions such as uveitis, retinal detachment, or cataract, and for the surgery of these conditions.

This is a most interesting and informative book, and should do much to stimulate interest in ophthalmology.

J. H. DOBREE

Surgery of the Eye. By E. D. DORRELL. 1977. Pp. 217, figs., refs. Blackwell, Oxford (£10.50)

This well-written book is primarily of value to trainee ophthalmic surgeons. A comprehensive account of ocular surgery is given in separate chapters, with instructions and descriptions which are brief but explicit while being abundantly illustrated by accompanying monochrome line drawings. Throughout the text the author draws on his extensive experience by pointing out the various pitfalls which may arise during the course of the surgery while, at the same time, he offers advice on measures which may be adopted to combat them. It is to be expected that every surgeon will find some item of technique with which to disagree, and this is indeed so with this book, although happily these individual disagreements are very rare and minor. A well-merited place is assured for this book in both large and small ophthalmic libraries.

IAN M. DUGUID

Orbit Roentgenology. Edited by PETER H. ARGER. 1977. Pp. 274, figs., tables, refs. John Wiley, Chichester (£33.85)

This work is a multiple-author volume edited by Professor Arger, of the University of Pennsylvania, and includes among the contributors many leading experts in the field of ophthalmology and ophthalmic radiology.

The aim of the book is to provide physicians with the information necessary to provide the best possible care for patients with orbital problems. Like many multiple-author works it suffers from some unevenness both in the length of contribution and in quality. Plain x-ray changes and computerised tomography of the orbit are now the dominant investigations in orbital disease. These investigations are given rather less prominence in the text than are angiographic studies (carotid arteriography and orbital venography), which are now only required in selected patients. There are also some omissions: for example, there is no chapter on dacryocystography or on

the localisation of foreign bodies in the eye by radiography. These are surely needed in a textbook of ophthalmic radiology.

The standard of illustration is excellent, and one would particularly pick out the contributions of Dr Jacqueline Vignaud and her colleagues in this respect: the chapter on the external carotid supply to the orbit is quite superb, both in text and illustration, though perhaps an over-elaboration in a textbook of this size.

In short, this is a work of mixed quality with many excellent contributions and perhaps most appeal to the specialist radiologist or ophthalmologist. It is too unbalanced to be recommended as a primer on the subject for trainees.

GLYN A. S. LLOYD

Correspondence

Adjunct to tonometry

SIR, I wonder if I could bring to your attention a useful adjunct to tonometry. In cases where one suspects that an eye may be infected, particularly with a virus disease, it is always rather unpleasant to have to use an applanation tonometer because one is well aware of the considerable difficulty in sterilising it afterwards with real confidence.

Back in the 1950s, I recollect that someone in the USA described a device called a Tonofilm which was to be used under a Schiötz tonometer, but I am not aware that this ever became widely used. I find, however, if one takes a small piece of Cling-Film of the sort that is sold in ordinary grocers' shops to wrap sandwiches, etc., one can in fact wrap the end of an applanation tonometer and thus carry out tonometry insulated from the conjunctival secretions. It is necessary to make sure that the film is smoothed down accurately on the plane surface at the contact head of the applanation prism, otherwise a high reading is obtained. If, however, the film is smoothed down carefully the reading appears to be exactly the same as obtained with no film in position. I hope that this little tip may be of assistance to people working particularly in casualty departments, where the danger of cross-infection with virus conditions is sometimes a problem. If it is wished to sterilise the film it can be cut into small squares packed between layers of paper and autoclaved in the usual manner.

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Notes

Services to the visually handicapped

A cross-section of workers with visually handicapped persons met at Coventry on the 21-22 October 1978 and resolved to form a single new organisation of individuals