

Book reviews

Advances in Ophthalmology. Vol. 40. Eds. M. J. ROPER-HALL, H. SAUTTER, E. B. STREIFF. Pp. 224. DM188. Karger: Basle, Switzerland. 1980.

This volume gives information on three diverse subjects, namely, the causes of blindness throughout the world; the proteins in the aqueous humour; and the standardization of visual field testing. The first report emphasises once again the problem of even finding a uniform definition of blindness and the difficulties of obtaining reliable statistics. There are, however, some useful tables which give a guide to the widely differing problems in many countries. The second report is a very useful general account of how proteins may enter the anterior chamber and the extensive work of analysis on which the author has been engaged for many years. It ends with an extensive bibliography and is thus a most useful account of this subject. The final report was commissioned by the National Research Council of America. It gives an account of the basic factors in visual field testing. It does not make any particularly new recommendations but is useful in that it summarises the well known facts about field testing which have been contributed by others as well as American authors.

R. F. FISHER

Textbook and Atlas of Slit Lamp Microscopy of the Living Eye. Vol. 2. By Alfred Vogt. Pp. 422. DM600. Wayenborgh: Bonn, W. Germany. 1979.

This is an English translation of volume 2 of the incomparable textbook and atlas published by Vogt in 1931. The excellence of the original colour drawings and black-and-white photographic illustrations has been fully maintained. For anyone wanting an excellent translation of the foundations of slit-lamp examination of the lens and zonule this volume is obligatory. Since the subject matter consists mainly of descriptive observations, the volume is by no means dated and is thus a worthwhile book of reference. I am afraid, however, its high price will prevent its purchase by many ophthalmologists.

R. F. FISHER

Vitreoretinal Disease. By PETER H. MORSE. Pp. 625. £51.00. YB Medical Publishers: London. 1979.

This book details the experience and interests of the director of the Retinal Service in the Pritzker School of Medicine in the University of Chicago. The title is misleading, as more than half the book is concerned with retinal conditions which have no vitreous implications whether by causation or complication. Although most 'medical' retinal conditions are adequately documented, this aspect of the book compares unfavourably with a recent alternative text on retinal and choroidal diseases from the Pritzker School.

Readers expecting a truly vitreoretinal manual will find the sections on vitreous surgery and previtrectomy assessment disappointingly short, with only half a page of

text devoted to ultrasound examination, and virtually no discussion of multiple-incision/common-gauge surgery, which is the current vogue. The most valuable part of the book is that third which is devoted to the assessment and treatment of rhegmatogenous retinal detachment. The author describes in great detail the preoperative, operative, and postoperative management of patients, discussing both the 'buried implant plus diathermy' as well as the 'explant plus cryotherapy' methods of treatment. However, the almost missionary zeal with which measures to improve patients' comfort and wellbeing are advocated sometimes blurs the issues; for example, the chapter on 'scleral buckling techniques' begins with 2 paragraphs on straps—not of the encircling silicone variety but the heavy leather type securing the patient to the theatre trolley or operating table. Technical instructions also tend to be unduly fastidious—'the foot-pedal (for cryotherapy) should be placed near the surgeon's foot'—while the diagram of treatment of a retinal tear implies that double freezing of the bare pigment epithelium within the break is desirable. The description of giant breaks also compounds the continuing confusion about this topic among retinal surgeons.

Overall, the book is well written but is only modestly illustrated and is somewhat lacking in direction. The section on 'macular pucker', for example, is relegated to a 'miscellaneous conditions' chapter near the end of the book (nestling uncomfortably between 'photoreceptor degeneration and cancer' and 'retinal haemorrhage in the newborn') and includes no mention of surgical treatment. Each chapter ends with a bibliography, whose usefulness is limited by the virtual exclusion of non-American publications and the absence of any referencing system within the text itself. DAVID MCLEOD

Vitrectomy. 2nd edn. By ROBERT MACHEMER and THOMAS M. AABERG. Pp. 262. \$23.50. Grune and Stratton: New York. 1979.

In the second edition of this book Dr Machemer has been joined by Dr Aaberg. The authors state that the book is not intended to be an encyclopaedia on vitrectomy but a presentation of the personal experience of the 2 authors. The fact that this edition is considerably larger than the first reflects the rapid advances that have been made in this field of microsurgery during the last few years. The indications and contraindications for vitrectomy are continually changing. Disorders such as diabetic retinopathy with severe rubeosis iridis and retinal detachments complicated by severe periretinal proliferation, which were previously considered inoperable, may now benefit from surgery.

Despite the addition of much new material and an expansion of the bibliography, this edition has a logical sequence and is easy to read. The first few chapters deal with the selection of patients, the rationale for treatment, and preparation of instruments. The emphasis of the book is very much on surgical techniques. All the new techniques such as the removal of epiretinal membranes, fluid-gas exchange, and transvitreal cryotherapy and drainage of subretinal fluid are described in detail and