Book reviews

Ophthalmic Plastic and Orbital Surgery. By MICHAEL A. CALLAHAN and ALSTON CALLAHAN. Pp. 230. US$100. Aesculapius Publishing Company: Birmingham, Alabama. 1979.

This book is written primarily for ophthalmologists with a special interest in ophthalmic plastic surgery. It covers the fundamentals of plastic surgery including anaesthesia, surgical preparation of the skin, the principles of atraumatic surgery, haemostasis, wound closure, suturing techniques, materials, and dressings and then proceeds with chapters on congenital anomalies, enucleation, ptosis, entropion and ectropion, etc., as well as including chapters on blepharospasm and lacrimal, orbital, and conjunctival surgery. Operations and techniques are clearly described, with their potential complications and management. Most of these procedures can be recommended, but a more conservative approach may sometimes be justified. Thus few surgeons in Britain would recommend open reduction and wiring of a zygomatic fracture in the first instance.

The text is very clearly presented and superbly illustrated with copious coloured drawings but no clinical photographs. This omission is deliberate, since the authors have an extensive collection of pre- and postoperative photographs, but without them the uninitiated reader is not given an idea of the results which can be achieved with any given procedure. This would not be a disadvantage to a surgeon who is actively involved in ophthalmic plastic surgery, and for him this book can be highly recommended, as most of the procedures which he may want to try are so clearly presented and easy to find. J. R. O. COLLIN

Ageing of the Lens. (Eds.) FRANCOIS REGNAULT, OTTO HOCKWIN, and YVES COURTOIS. Pp. 315. Dfl.115·00. Elsevier/North Holland: Amsterdam. 1980.

This is an interesting book comprising a collection of papers on diverse topics. The first part includes the genetic expression of γ crystalline synthesis, changes with age in lens enzymes and lens crystallins, and the properties of albuminoid and membrane protein. The second part deals with differences in cyclic nucleotide composition in different animals, and the changes which occur with age, the role of calcium in lens membrane permeability, together with several papers on the properties of different types of congenital cataract. The third part deals with clinical aspects of lens transparency and the assessment of drugs which might inhibit cataract formation by means of a comparison of photographs taken with an advanced photo-slit lamp. R. F. FISHER

Evoked Potentials. (Ed.) COLIN BARBER. Pp. 614. £29·00. MTP: Lancaster. 1980.

This book represents a series of papers given at the International Evoked Responses Symposium, held in Nottingham in 1978. The papers are all concerned with the electrical changes elicited over the scalp by stimulating different afferent nerves throughout the body. The production of these evoked responses by stimulating the eye with light, the ear with sound, and the skin with tactile stimuli is considered in different sections, and the nonspecialist reader may be surprised by some of the advances made in recent years. The first part of the book, on 'Background and perspective', gives a series of useful summaries of the up-to-date applications of these techniques, and the rest of the book provides a comprehensive reference source for the more specialised reader. N. R. GALLOWAY

Microsurgery of the Glaucomas. By MIKHAIL M. KRASNOV. Pp. 184. £24·00. YB Medical Publishers: London. 1979.

This is not a manual of glaucoma microsurgery, though basic principles and operative details of a number of procedures are included, but an exposition of the author's approach to the surgical management of the glaucomas. This he terms cause-directed, and his choice of operation is governed by the principle of eliminating the specific cause of the raised pressure rather than circumventing it.

A number of conventional glaucoma operations, for example, iridectomy and goniotomy, fulfil the requirements of this approach, but the traditional filtering operations for open-angle glaucoma are considered unphysiological and best replaced by one of a number of microsurgical procedures. Thus trabeculotomy becomes the operation of choice when the major site of resistance to aqueous outflow is the trabecular tissues and externalisation of the canal of Schlemm, or sinusotomy, when the site of resistance is believed to be primarily intrascleral. For combined trabecular and intrascleral resistance the author advocates a modified trabeculectomy in which the trabecular strip is only partially excised and the free end inserted either into the anterior chamber—a trabeculostomy—or posteriorly into the suprachoroidal space—a trabeculocyclostomy.

There is much to recommend this approach to glaucoma surgery, but not without some reservations. For example, there is scant evidence for the existence of intrascleral resistance per se, and the diagnosis of such a condition on the basis of blood reflux into Schlemm's canal and a rise in pressure on limbal compression must be on shaky ground. Similarly the treatment of hypersecretion glaucoma by cyclocoagulation or cycloanaemisation is open to the criticism that the diagnosis, made tonographically, is by inference only. The relatively new microsurgical procedures described in this book are elegant and theoretically attractive but, like trabeculotomy before them, are unlikely to gain a wide following when effective and technically simpler procedures such as trabeculectomy exist.

The book itself is well produced, and the standard of illustration is high throughout. The text, a translation from the original Russian, is clear but not altogether easy reading, partly owing to the proliferation of hybrid terms such as sinusotrabeculotomy. As a practical guide to the surgery of glaucoma this book will have little