

the other hand he would warn the ophthalmologist in training that this is not an intimate guide to clinical practice; it is, rather, an outstanding contribution to the clinicopathological understanding of fundus disease. DAVID W. HILL

Dictionary of Medical Ethics. Eds. A. S. DUNCAN, G. R. DUNSTAN, R. B. WELBOURN. Pp. 459. £12.50. Darton Longman and Todd: London. 1981.

This is the second edition of a book first issued in 1977 and now no doubt has been produced in revised and enlarged edition in response to a wide demand. It is of course a work of reference, and its title is self-explanatory. A very wide spectrum of topics which may at times impinge on medical ethics in the broadest sense are touched upon rather than considered in depth. However, excellent sign-posting to further reading is given under all the major headings. Many of the topics are somewhat esoteric. On the other hand many others have day-to-day implications for most clinicians, topics for example like clinical trials, confidentiality, consent, and medical journalism, on all of which there is a really useful commentary.

Although there are nearly 150 contributors to this work, drawn from a wide range of disciplines, medical and otherwise, there is no contribution from an ophthalmologist. This is rather surprising, since he might well have been expected to comment on the everyday ethical problem of visual fitness to drive. Indeed there does not appear to be any comment in the work on the ethics governing other aspects of medical fitness to drive, a topic which perhaps future editions should include.

There can be no doubt that this is an important and useful work of reference which should be within reach not only of clinicians but also those directly responsible for the care of patients in the wider sense, as well as those lay folk who feel themselves in need of basic information on medical ethics.

JOHN WINSTANLEY

Handbook of Orthoptic Principles. 4th edn. By G. T. WILLOUGHBY CASHELL and ISOBEL M. DURRAN. Pp. 168. £5.50. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1980.

The preface of this book states that it hopes to provide an introductory handbook laying the broad foundations of patterns of binocular disturbances and principles of treatment primarily for the benefit of ophthalmologists. On the whole the aim is achieved, and this updated edition provides a very readable book of basic orthoptic principles. The ophthalmologist can build on these with practical experience and further reading.

Throughout, the handbook needs fuller description of some of the practical tests to help the reader perform and interpret them accurately. As examples, the description of the Bielschowsky head tilting test is inadequate, the importance of controlling accommodation when assessing the

deviation in A and V phenomena is neglected, and the relevance of the A C/A ratio in the aetiology of convergence excess squint is omitted. The inclusion of a complete chapter on visual acuity and amblyopia is appropriate for this important topic. But again more time spent on prognosis and choice of management would be useful, particularly for those ophthalmologists who do not have the benefit of an orthoptist's experience in the management of amblyopia.

The book contains several statements that could be disputed or need expanding for clarification (any orthoptic student suggesting that Bagolini glasses were cylinders would not impress her teacher). But for the most part it fulfils its purpose effectively and would be a valuable asset to the surgeon.

PATRICIA MCKINLEY

Mechanisms of Cataract Formation in the Human Lens. Ed. GEORGE DUNCAN. Pp. 262. £20.00. Academic Press: London. 1981.

This is a most useful book in bringing together many diverse approaches which attempt to understand the factors causing the crystalline lens to become opaque. The book rightly begins with a method of classifying cataract. However, the brief mention in the classification of posterior polar cataract belies its importance in causing visual disability. Detailed chapters on factors which are involved in cataract formation follow. These chapters deal with development, physical and chemical properties of the lens, together with the effect of light upon it. Further chapters deal with the biochemical and physiological properties of lens membranes, and the effects of hypocalcaemia are also included. Finally, in the last chapter an interesting contrast between possible medical and surgical treatment of cataract is discussed. R. F. FISHER

Contact Lenses: Soft and Advanced Lens Fitting Techniques and Post-fitting Care. 2 Vols. 2nd edn. Eds. JANET STONE and ANTHONY J. PHILLIPS. Pp. 692. £29.50. Butterworths: London. 1981.

The second edition of this textbook is in 2 volumes. The first deals with hard and the second with soft lenses, and in addition both books have added material which is common to both. The first criticism is that a better arrangement of subjects would assist the reader. The book has a chapter on ocular pathology which uses terminology not consistent with that used by ophthalmologists. A large chapter on soft lens fitting is comprehensive but fails to deal effectively with basic criteria. There appears to be an overlap in the fitting of toric lenses which is best dealt with in one chapter. This is a book written by popular optometric teachers and as such will prove a useful text. It is hoped that much tighter editing will be applied to future editions, even to the extent of having one book instead of 2.

MONTAGUE RUBEN