Book reviews

Many of these show light pathways in pictorial perspective view and are extremely clear and helpful.

When describing individual instruments the author does not avoid the task of comparison, and he carries it out fairly. This is valuable in areas such as field testing equipment, keratometers and optometers, where large numbers of different instruments are available. This work has few weak points. It was not apparent in the chapter on ophthalmoscopes that most indirect instruments are binocular. The section on photography of the corneal endothelium should be rewritten. Not all aspects of ocular and visual measurement are covered—for example, there is no mention of electrodiagnosis or of orthoptics—but in this the author remains true to his title. Useful and visually appealing, this book deserves to be read by optometrists and ophthalmologists alike.

ROGER J. BUCKLEY

Pocket Atlas of Ophthalmology. By FRITZ HOLLWICH. Pp. 182. £13.25. Year Book Medical Publishers: London. 1981.

The purpose of this small atlas is to provide the non-ophthalmologist with a quick diagnostic guide to common eye disorders. Each of the 19 chapters starts with a synopsis of its contents and a brief description of anatomy.

Although the vast majority of the 365 colour illustrations are of excellent quality, the same cannot be said of the text. The description of diabetic retinopathy is out of date and confusing. The non-ophthalmologist may be disappointed to find examples of extremely rare disorders such as 'butterfly dystrophy' and 'Stargardt's disease' but no illustrations of proliferative diabetic retinopathy or intraocular lens implants. Although various outdated operations for chronic glaucoma are shown, there is no mention of trabeculectomy or laser trabeculoplasty.

The non-ophthalmologist will probably find this atlas confusing, as there is little to guide him to the relative frequency and importance of the various disorders. However, the ophthalmologist in training will find most of the illustrations extremely useful.

J. J. KANSKI

Aging and Human Visual Function. Eds. ROBERT SEKULER, DONALD KLINE, KEY DISMUKES. Pp. 350. £41.00. Alan R. Liss: New York. 1982.

Despite the plethora of symposia issued in the last few years and the fact that most publishers seem to think a clever or catchy title will sell any collection of badly written and unrelated papers this volume is a gem. Careful editing and a logical theme together with an equally careful selection of expert authors have resulted in an extremely useful reference source for both the vision scientist and the ophthalmic clinician. The book is also of a rare kind in that it is extremely readable, with just enough in each chapter to stimulate the initiate into pursuing the abundant references.

The book explores the aging visual system and examines the hinterland between what is normally termed aging processes and what is usually referred to as senile pathology. In doing this it breaks the subject down into 5 key areas:

anatomical and physiological changes; alterations in basic visual functions; changes in perception and information processing; the human impact of the aging visual system; and finally current methods of studying each of these areas. This approach of analysing the aging visual system as a whole rather than the normal approach of examining the eye tissue by tissue and ignoring the higher visual centres, or vice versa, is very refreshing and leads to some interesting conclusions. One of the most striking of these is that for vision, at least, life certainly does not begin at 40, as it seems that this is the key year for senile degenerative processes to become manifest in a surprising variety of ocular tissues.

The juxtapositioning of the basic anatomical changes with age and their physiological manifestations is particularly helpful and even more so in that the clinical implications for the pathological complications of extreme senile changes are also explained.

In all, this is a very useful book that should be dipped into if not read by all with an interest in the aging visual system. The contributors and particularly the editors should be congratulated by their peers for a job well done.

JOHN MARSHALL

Turning Points in Cataract Formation, Syndromes and Retinoblastoma. Ed. W. STRAUB. Pp. 100. SFr.94.00. S. Karger: Basel. 1983.

This slim, multiauthored volume covers 3 rare and rather diverse subjects. The first chapter investigates in detail the nature and complications of cataract-induced blindness, which occurred in 61 of 744 Nepalese leprosy patients. This is followed by a meticulous catalogue of the features of François's dyscephalic syndrome (which bears a close similarity to the Hallermann-Streif syndrome). The book concludes with a comprehensive review article by Balmer and Gailloud on the diagnosis and treatment of retinoblastoma.

One must question the value of such a publication. Details of each subject are available in journals or other more comprehensive volumes which are subject-related. It falls short of its objective to acquaint readers with crucial new findings in clinical ophthalmology and cannot really be classed as a 'turning point.'

CLIVE MIGDAL

Augenärztliche Begutachtung im Versicherungswesen. By BERNDT GRAMBERG-DANIELSEN and LUDWIG MEWE. Pp. 112. DM 30. Ferdinand Enke Verlag: Stuttgart. 1982.

Ophthalmic practice is becoming increasingly involved with medicolegal matters, particularly in the United States and now more frequently on the Continent. This handbook acts as a guide to aid the ophthalmologist in his dealings with the law, giving definitions, statistics, and advice on the sort of ocular problems that crop up in insurance claims and disability pensions. The book is designed for use in the Federal Republic of Germany, and although many of its themes are universal much is parochial and therefore unlikely to appeal to a wider audience.

T. J. FFYTCH