

Book reviews

An Atlas of Diseases of the Eye. 3rd Edn. By ES Perkins, Peter Hansell, Ronald J Marsh. Pp. 90. £14.95. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1986.

The third edition of this excellent atlas fully lives up to its predecessors and has a completely revised layout. With the inclusion of fluorescein angiograms, line drawings, EMI scans, and the like the value of the colour illustrations is considerably enhanced. The purpose of the book is to provide medical students, general medical practitioners, specialists in branches of medicine other than ophthalmology, and ophthalmologists in training with an illustrated guide to the more common and important ocular disorders.

The book is 90 pages long with half of the pages devoted to illustrations, mainly in colour. The quality of the illustrations is high and the colour reproduction excellent. The book admirably fulfils its stated purpose. The text is brief but appropriate and the authors are to be congratulated on producing a very comprehensive illustrated guide to clinical ophthalmology in a very small compass. WS FOULDS

Pathology of the Eye. By GOH Naumann and DJ Apple. Pp. 998. DM720.00. Springer-Verlag, Berlin: 1986.

In 1980 Professor Naumann, assisted by a small number of coauthors, wrote a comprehensive textbook of ocular pathology which was distinguished by its accuracy, clarity, good illustrations, numerous tables, and informative line diagrams. Combined with a high standard of production this made for a first-class contribution to the field, and the few complaints of substance concerned its inaccessibility to those who could not read German and its cost.

The first but not the second cause for complaint has now been removed in this translation by one of the original contributors, Dr Apple. Opportunity has been taken to bring the text up to date and to add many more references.

A brief description of ocular anatomy, development, and investigative histopathological techniques is followed by a moderately detailed account of the normal microscopical appearances of the eye. Chapters dealing with developmental anomalies, intraocular inflammation (the latter perhaps a little confused in its organisation and aims), and trauma are next. Then come 10 chapters dealing with the pathology of individual ocular tissues and structures. Sections on ocular manifestations of systemic disease and toxic reactions complete the contents.

Recent years have seen the publication of several excellent contributions to the literature of ophthalmic pathology, so how does the present text compare? Written with clinical ophthalmologists in mind, it is factual, with emphasis on morphological findings, and it avoids the excesses of speculation which detailed discussion of pathogenetic mechanisms can invite. The information given is sound and precise, and the supportive photographs are well chosen even if, inevitably, other than in an extended atlas, many conditions are not illustrated. The acid test is whether it can be recommended to one's students, and for my part the answer

is unequivocally in the affirmative provided they can beg, borrow, or steal a copy, because few will be able to afford to buy it. ALEC GARNER

Ocular Pathology. 3rd Edn. Clinical Applications and Self-Assessment. By David J Apple and Maurice F. Rabb. Pp. 560. £114.00. Blackwell: Oxford. 1985.

Three editions in 11 years speaks not only of the rapid changes in the field of ocular pathology but also for the acceptability of the earlier editions. Publishers do not perpetuate flops.

To what extent is the latest edition an improvement on its predecessors? From the beginning there has been a conscious emphasis on clinical relevance, and this is now even more evident, which is as it should be in a text designed for ophthalmologists. An intelligent approach to diagnosis and management presupposes an understanding of the causative processes at a tissue level, and the authors are to be congratulated for their efforts in this direction: they have achieved a large measure of success. There is a considerable increase in literature references, although a minority only are actually discussed, and the section dealing with the lens now includes a valuable contribution on intraocular lens implants and their sequelae. The information generally has been updated and reflects current concepts, but in controversial fields there has been a tendency towards caution which has incurred superficiality at times. The description of primary open angle glaucoma is a case in point: 22 lines in a double-column text does not reflect the importance of this condition, and, while it is true to say, as the authors do, that the pathogenesis remains obscure, this is to do less than justice to the large effort which has gone into defining some of the contributory tissue disturbances.

In reviewing a textbook of this size it is impracticable to comment on every topic and I chose to pay particular attention to areas in which I pretend to some expertise, to assess the reliability, and topics which I find confusing, to judge the extent to which the text illuminates them. In respect of the first objective I could find very little with which to take exception, and so far as the second was concerned I was often pleasantly surprised.

At the end of the book there is a self-assessment quiz which can be answered with confidence if the reader has assimilated what has gone before. I was relieved to find that I agreed with virtually all the answers (perhaps a more humble reviewer would say he was relieved not to be shown up).

The illustrations and standard of presentation are excellent, and I applaud the replacement of the well-meaning but inconvenient stereophotographs slotted into the back of the second edition by a fewer number of superb colour plates.

Taken as a whole, this is a book which deserves and can expect to extend the popularity of the earlier editions. I commend it warmly to those for whom it is designed, ophthalmologists with inquiring minds who want to be better informed about the diseases they are called upon to treat. ALEC GARNER