Initially he had started to study mining engineering following the example of his father and grandfather, but he soon realised that medicine was more attractive to him.

He entered the medical faculty at the University of Lwow and, graduating in 1938, became an assistant in the eye department of the university hospital. He remained in this position during the second world war and occupation first by Russia then by Germany and finally again by Russia. During this last period he served with the Polish army as an ophthalmic specialist in Lublin.

After demobilisation he became consultant ophthalmologist in the eye department of the newly created University of Lublin and was promoted to professor in 1957. Apart from his important discovery of the use of cryo techniques in surgery he was also responsible for leading research in the fields of biochemistry, immunology, corneal structure, and experimental refractive keratoplasty. In all he published more than 100 papers on these and related subjects, becoming a member of the Polish Academy of Science in 1957. However, it is for cryosurgery that he will be chiefly remembered.

Professor Krwawicz relates in his autobiography how the idea of cryoxtraction came to him during experimental work on rabbits in which he was having difficulty achieving intracapsular lens extraction. He noticed the strength of the adhesion of a frozen probe to the lens and decided to try this method for lens extraction. After preliminary work on rabbits he progressed to human subjects, with the excellent results that surgeons trained from 1960 until the mid-1980s will recognise. (It is remarkable that many surgeons trained during the last few years may hardly have seen a cryoxtraction, so rapid has been the switch to modern extracapsular techniques.) He published his method first at the Congress of Polish Ophthalmologists in 1960, where it was received with enthusiasm. The method was soon adopted widely, though his original method using ‘dry ice’ (carbon dioxide snow) and alcohol was sometimes misunderstood, so that ordinary frozen water was used. Eventually other types of cryoprobes were introduced, and the technique became virtually standard practice in many of the major centres of ophthalmology the world over. He spoke at the Oxford congress in 1965 and was greeted with applause.

Tadeusz Krwawicz was born and spent his early years in the country, so that his chief delights were country pursuits and a love of nature. He was never so happy as in the woods with his two beloved dogs enjoying the general atmosphere whether by night or day. The recipient of many awards and honours in both eastern and western Europe, he travelled widely in response to invitations from many parts of the world. He was the first president of the Cryophthalmological Society. Sadly his wife died in an accident some years ago. His son also became an ophthalmologist. In Professor Krwawicz Poland has lost a great representative in world ophthalmology.

KG and JLR

Book reviews

The Retina: An Approachable Part of the Brain.

There are very few scientific books that fall into the category of ‘I could not put it down’ but this is one which must certainly does. Within its pages the reader is instantly captivated by the highly readable prose of an undoubted leader in the field of retinal physiology. John Dowling is, however, not only a distinguished research worker: he is also one of those few individuals whose intellect and understanding are coupled with the ability to teach, enthuse and stimulate his readers.

The book is a brilliant review of retinal physiology past and present and is written in such a fashion that students at all levels will find it invaluable. It starts with an overview of the ways in which research workers have utilised progressively more complex biological organisms in order to investigate the functions of neurones and ultimately the brain. In this initial review the role of the retina and vision research is highlighted, and the appropriateness of the book’s subtitle immediately becomes apparent, as indeed the retina is an approachable part of the brain. Professor Dowling then goes on to give a thorough and systematic account of the retina and the ways in which modern research have begun to enable an understanding of its functions. He starts by giving a beautifully illustrated account of the various types of retinal neurones, their detailed anatomy, and their location. In this section he also enhances the morphological descriptions of retinal elements by interrelating them with a number of different aspects of infor-

In its two volumes and over 1100 pages this work is a compilation of the knowledge of some of the finest ophthalmologists practising today, though it must be admitted the list of authors is confined largely to those from the United States. For the most part the editors have achieved a remarkable consistency in style with the exception of the many fine line drawings, which do reflect the differing techniques of the six principal illustrators. The illustrations are copious and informative, and the lack of colour plates is hardly noticed at all. Because each chapter is written by an acknowledged expert, the text becomes clear and effortless to read.

Inevitably there are omissions and for the most part they are not a serious detraction from the quality of the work. I personally would have enjoyed a chapter on surgical instrumentation and materials and a few introductory remarks on the simple but important subjects of incisions and correct suturing techniques. It is impossible to discuss each chapter or even each section in the detail they deserve, but the purposes of this review can be served by my mentioning two sections, one in which I have a major interest and one in which my interest is perhaps less keen. The section on the cornea is well balanced ranging from penetrating keratoplasty to keratoprosthesis. (I was relieved to read that the author of the chapter did not have much enthusiasm for the latter technique.) The chapter on lamellar keratoplasty was a welcome sight in an American textbook, though perhaps Woltman (the author) might have given a slightly better idea of how difficult the procedure is. 'Dissections down to Descemet's may be carried out' (1).

Refractive surgery was covered in detail, though events have overtaken the chapter on epikeratophakia, since the experts no longer recommend keratectomy as part of the preparation of the host bed. There is also a comprehensive chapter dealing with excision of pterygium by a technique that ought to prove effective. It is a mark of the success of the book that despite the condensation of each aspect of ophthalmic surgery to a few chapters there is room for discussion of minutiae; the corneal section was no exception, with mention being made of iridoplasty during corneal grafting. My main complaint about this section was that there was little discussion of the emergency corneal graft, which is a most difficult procedure for the infrequent corneal graft surgeon, yet it is precisely this surgery that the infrequent graftor is sometimes called upon to perform. By contrast I also found the chapters on photocoagulation clear and precise, and having read them I felt that even a first year senior house officer should have a good idea of the practicalities of retinal photocoagulation and in particular which patients would be likely to benefit and which patients would not.

These volumes will soon be found on the bookshelves of most large eye departments throughout the English-speaking world. I would certainly recommend them to everyone, but I do hope the publisher will attempt to keep them up to date with frequent revisions in the future. It would be a pity to see such a fine work become obsolete.

COLIN M KIRKNESS

Notes

Immunopathology of intraocular inflammation

A symposium on recent developments in the immunopathology of intraocular inflammation will be held in Amsterdam on 31 October to 3 November 1989. Details from Dr A Kijlstra, Department of Ophthalmo-immunopathology, Netherlands Ophthalmic Research Institute, PO Box 12141, 1100 AC Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Ophthalmic photography

An International Conference on Ophthalmic Photography (ICOP '90) will be held at Singapore on 14–17 March 1990. Details from Lawrence M Merin, RBP, Meeting Chairman ICOP '90, Cullen Eye Institute, Baylor College of Medicine, 6501 Fannin, Houston, Texas 77030, USA.

Paediatric surgery

The 4th Steglitz Paediatric Surgical Symposium on 'Laser application in children' will be held in Berlin on 10–11 November 1989 at the International Congress Centre. Details from Dr Felix Schier, Department of Paediatric Surgery, Free University of Berlin, Hindenburgdamm 30, 1000 Berlin 45, West Germany.