BOOK REVIEWS

Ophthalmology
A Textbook for Diploma Students


The first edition of this book was published in 1955 and the second edition, though similar in structure and content, has been fully revised and many recent developments in ophthalmology included.

The sections on anatomy, physiology and optics are in the main unaltered, though recent advances in the physiology of the vitreous and a photograph of a modern synoptophore have been included.

The clinical section has been well brought up to date, with the main emphasis on current surgical thinking. Thus keratoplasty is given more prominence and lamellar keratoplasty discussed in the treatment of keratitis. The surgery of cataract now includes a welcome paragraph on alpha chymotrypsin, some mention of the eviscerate, and finer details on dealing with vitreous loss. The use of acrylic implants has been reappraised with the conclusion that 'a really safe technique has yet to be determined'. The glaucoma chapter gives Diamox its rightful place in the treatment of this condition and finer details of the surgery and complications thereof make this an excellent chapter. Similarly, the surgery of retinal detachment is more detailed and treatment by photocoagulation is discussed.

It seems unfortunate, however, that a book of this nature has no reference to the symptomatology of carotid occlusion.

This remains an excellent book, which is clearly written, well produced and illustrated, and strongly recommended for diploma students and those who desire a comprehensive knowledge of modern British ophthalmology.

Practical Therapeutics


This book is, according to the authors, aimed at the medical student during the clinical stage; but it could be read with profit by the newly qualified and by more exalted members of the profession. The therapies propounded are, indeed, practical and in their bias incline to what might be called the 'new orthodoxy'. There is a skeleton of pharmacology and physiology, generally adequate, but the main emphasis of the book is upon therapy. The section dealing with the treatment of electrolyte disorders is, perhaps, the best thing in the book and includes some useful tables of the electrolyte content of various replacement fluids. There are also good sections on antibiotics, on diabetes and on the war against the staphylococcus.

A few critical comments also arise:—Levallorphan, the best of the opiate antagonists, is not mentioned, nor is the useful short-acting barbiturate, methohexitol sodium. And it is surely accepted, nowadays, that radiation treatment for ankylosing spondylitis results in an increased incidence of leukemia. However, these are minor strictures on a sound textbook of therapeutics.

Muscles Alive
—Their functions revealed by electromyography


An introductory chapter outlines the history of scientific experiments relating to muscle function, and the development of electromyography, of techniques and apparatus. The value of needle and wire electrodes, often specially constructed for the purpose, is stressed. An emg assessment of muscle tone, fatigue, and muscle antagonism and synergism follows. The mechanics of movement and posture throughout the various sections of the body are detailed and freely illustrated, and include emg studies of the limb, trunk, and head muscles, the muscles of respiration and abdominal wall, the mouth, larynx and pharynx, face and neck, and even the extra-ocular muscles and middle ear. The book makes interesting reading, and many will agree with the views expressed concerning the function of ligaments rather than muscles, and in maintaining the integrity of joints.

This account is supported throughout by some 80 references to the author's own work, and the work of many other authorities in this field is summarised in a further 23 pages of references. It is not a book for the general physician. It will interest the physical medicine consultant more than the neurologist or orthopedic surgeon. It is mainly concerned with healthy muscle function and mechanics, and not with neuro-muscular disease, and as such its appeal is primarily to the applied anatomist and physiologist. It is well produced, and the excellent typography makes it easy to read.

Roentgenology of the Abdomen


This volume is a bound section of the loose-leaf edition of Golden's diagnostic roentgenology. As such one can be sure that it is as up to date as any textbook is likely to be. The subject matter is confined to a study of the abdomen excluding lesions arising in the gastrointestinal tube or the urinary tract.

After a brief introduction on technique and a chapter on the abdominal wall, there is an excellent section on roentgen anatomy; this section will be particularly valuable to the more junior radiologist as it will show him how, working from first principles, anatomical knowledge and radiological appearances can be correlated.

There follows a detailed discussion of masses arising at various sites in the abdomen and the radiological appearances that these produce both directly and by deformity and displacement of neighbouring structures. The various organs are discussed individually apart from abdominal masses but in relation to non-tumorous lesions arising in them which nevertheless produce radiological changes. There are also chapters on abdominal venography and abdominal calcification, the latter being particularly comprehensive, although diabetes as cause of calcification in the vas deferens is not mentioned.

The whole work is clear and concise and most of the