FOREWORD

IT IS unusual for a single issue of this JOURNAL to be devoted to one subject; but this subject is exceptional, and so is this issue, not only in its size but also in its content.

There is no doubt that in the last few years new techniques in the operative aspects of ophthalmology have been dramatic; but equally there is no doubt that all the evidence points to the probability that in the next decade the most fruitful and important advances will lie in medical ophthalmology, much of which remains so enigmatic that there is no rational approach to management. In ocular surgery the inspired craftsman has a field of his own; in medicine a team is essential, not only of ophthalmologists but also of physicians, biochemists, physiologists, and experimental pathologists. The following papers provide an excellent example of the results which may emerge when two teams from ophthalmology and medicine combine in this way for the solution of a problem. They have applied new methods of clinical investigation and new experimental techniques, yielding results which can be interpreted as disturbed physiological processes having detailed consequences of absorbing interest when studied by the electron microscope. The nature and meaning of the changes resulting from the development of localized areas of reduced circulation in the retina—the fundamental aspect of many of its diseases—have given rise to doubts and controversies for many decades. These have now been clarified and our understanding of an immensely important clinical problem has been advanced more dramatically in the course of this combined investigation than in the work done in the previous century. Let us hope that this is merely a prelude to further endeavour and greater depth of understanding.

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