

BOOK NOTICE

Triennial Report and Statistics of the Government Ophthalmic Hospital, Madras, 1938-40. Madras: Superintendent Government Press. 1941. Price, 14 annas.

The report follows closely on the lines of previous reports. Tables are given of the classes and sexes treated, operations, infectious diseases, mortality, etc., as well as the administration report. In the table of classes of disease treated the numbers are given for indoor and outdoor patients for the three years and these can be seen at a glance. We note that there has been a falling off in the number of out-patients treated from 39,953 in 1938 to 35,868 in 1940. In 1939 the out-patients numbered 38,396, curiously the number of deaths for these three years show an increase of 4, 9, and 12. Retinitis pigmentosa for the years in question as out-patients give the figures 65, 81 and 88; while retinal detachment as in-patients show 27, 8 and 17. Diseases of the lacrymal apparatus as out-patients show the figures 434, 686 and 657. Details of finance and statistics of the training of medical students are also included in the report. Lectures on tuberculosis of the eye were given by Rao Bahadur Dr. K. Koman Nayar to the candidates attending the tuberculosis diseases diploma course at the Madras Medical College. The number of candidates who attended this course was ten.

CORRESPONDENCE

DEMANDS OF THE SERVICES

To the Editors of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY.

DEAR SIRS,—Would it not be to our country's advantage if a satisfactory adjustment of the problem of the "sight testing optician" could be reached at the present time? For the demands of the Civilian Services are hardly less urgent than those of the Fighting Services. The sight testers have been doing a large proportion of the refraction work of the country and no doubt some of them will be taken into the combatant forces. Ophthalmic Surgeons who are taken may find that they will be doing work which varies from refractions, ear work, office work, sick parades to little at all, with no chance of keeping up any eye surgery.

Such wastage should be avoided at all costs. However, sight testers, once trained as suggested by Mr. Rugg-Gunn, might break away and, backed by the enormous financial and advertising power of

the optical trade and assisted by a less expensive and shorter training, take over the entire refraction work of the country. For economic reasons all clinic work would fall to them. Within a short time eye surgeons would revert to the old arrangement where eye, ear, nose and throat work was combined or eye and skin, eye and general practice or eye and general surgery. There would not be enough eye men to staff general hospitals. The dispensing opticians would have to employ "trained" sight testers and eye doctors would have to do their own dispensing. Eventually there might be no more than 50 whole time eye specialists in the country.

We are being well represented by the Ophthalmic Group of the British Medical Association and by the Association of British Ophthalmologists, working in close contact with each other. It is of great importance that all eye men should assist these two bodies at this time and in any case bide loyally by their decisions.

Yours faithfully,

J. MYLES BICKERTON,
Senior Ophthalmic Surgeon,
King's College Hospital.
Late temp. Wing-Comdr., R.A.F.V.R.

OBITUARY

PERCY FLEMMING

THE death of Mr. Percy Flemming, Emeritus Professor of Ophthalmic Medicine and Surgery at University College, on December 19, 1941, at the age of 78 years was briefly announced in our last issue. A Londoner by birth, he was a product of University College, for his preliminary education was received at University College School and he proceeded to University College Hospital for his medical training; he was one of whom the School and Hospital were justly proud. Having taken the conjoint diplomas in 1885 he obtained his M.B. London in 1887 with the University Scholarship in medicine and honours in most of the other subjects. He took the M.D. with gold medal in 1888 and the F.R.C.S. Eng. in 1889 after a brilliant academic career.

Flemming succeeded to the vacancy in the ophthalmic department at University College Hospital caused by the resignation of Marcus Gunn. His chief was Sir John Tweedy and on the latter's retirement he advanced to the senior post. In 1900 he was elected to the staff at Moorfields and served his full time becoming consulting surgeon to both institutions. He was also a Fellow of University College.