COMMUNICATIONS

TEMPORA MUTANTUR

A national scientific journal has many parts to play. Its main duty, of course, is the recording of advances in the subject it professes, and the provision of a means whereby new ideas developed in the country of its origin can be passed into the general circulation of world thought; it should also offer the hospitality of its pages to those workers in other countries who have something to contribute to the general store of knowledge so that the practice of one country can be enriched by the progress of another. But a function of little less importance is to interpret the national spirit so far as the specialty with which it deals is concerned—for each people has its own peculiar means of expression—to nurse this spirit by inspiring its own nationals and to impress it, for what it is worth, on the corporate body of international thought. Moreover, it should foster the desire for enquiry and original observation in its own country and, as a common link and means of expression, bind together the members of the profession into a community with common interests and aspirations.
In these respects the British Journal of Ophthalmology has indeed been fortunate hitherto in those who have guided its policy. Ever since it was founded thirty-two years ago Sir John Herbert Parsons has been the Chairman of its Editorial Committee and our regrets will be shared by all our readers in many lands beyond our shores that he has now vacated his chair. No matter who guides its policy, however, if it is to have any merit and if it is to fulfil its responsibilities, a journal must lean heavily on its editor. To some extent, of course, he is limited by the material presented to him, but the impress of his personality must have a profound influence on the spirit of the publication. For 25 years this Journal has been fortunate in having the services of Robert Rutson James on its Editorial Committee, and for the last 19 years he has occupied the editorial chair. One of the most erudite, and at the same time lovable members of our profession, he has successfully maintained the traditions of the British Journal of Ophthalmology, guiding and encouraging our contributors and impressing his humanity and his unusual geniality upon our pages. Throughout his long tenure of office, he has never spared himself but has laboured faithfully in carrying out his onerous editorial duties, obviously loving everything he has done. It is with regret that we wish these two, who have carried the main responsibility of this Journal for so long, an official farewell; but we who carry their mantle are inspired by their example and comforted in the thought that neither has left us, for we hope they will long be with us to give us help and encouragement.

For the last 19 years Hyla B. Stallard has acted as Assistant Editor of the Journal and has been largely responsible for the technical supervision of its publication. Anyone who is acquainted with the intricacies of periodical publications will understand how fortunate we have been in having the services of one at the same time so able, conscientious and meticulous in everything he undertakes; and everyone who knows him will share our pleasure that he remains upon the Editorial Committee to serve the interests of the Journal in the future.

With the commencement of the thirty-third volume the Editorial Committee has been reconstituted and the Journal finds a new home in the Institute of Ophthalmology in London. Fortunately the new Committee retains most of the members of its predecessor; it thus has the advantage of continuity in maintaining a tradition of which it is proud.