The book is very informative and full of sound teaching, and gives a clear and well-integrated idea of modern thought regarding this perplexing disease. If the reviewer were to be critical at all, he might suggest that the impression received is that the subject is over-simplified and that not enough stress is laid on the immensity of our ignorance regarding many of its fundamental problems. There are also one or two points with which every ophthalmologist might not agree—for example, that an important cause of primary glaucoma is osmotic failure in the functioning of the canal of Schlemm. Sugar accepts Friedenwald's view that this canal is supplied by arterioles which convey plasma into the canal and which in glaucoma become sclerosed, that the content of Schlemm's canal is plasma, and that the aqueous veins should therefore be called plasma veins. This theory is built on a single histological observation, the interpretation of which is somewhat problematical. Moreover, the suggestion is made in several places that glaucoma may be caused by over-secretion of the aqueous humour; again, there is very little evidence to support this view. There are one or two minor mistakes, such as the statement that acetylcholine is the substance responsible for the transmission of all nerve impulses across synapses when all "sympathetic" synapses are obviously meant. But, on the whole, no one interested in the problem of glaucoma will find it possible to overlook this excellent résumé.


This book represents the work of some thirty collaborators, each an expert in his or her own field. The designation of "systemic" is justified by Professor Sorsby in his short preface, where he points out that the adjective "medical" has now become too narrow for the general aspects of eye disease which include surgical, obstetric, metabolic, and dermatological diseases and abnormalities, as well as other conditions. Enormous though the subject of Systemic Ophthalmology has now become, its many aspects are here adequately covered.

The book is divided into six main sections dealing successively with:

1. Prenatal pathogenic influences.
2. Inflammation, allergic reactions, and infections.
3. Nutritional, metabolic, and endocrine disturbances.
4. Central nervous system.
5. Cardiovascular and haemopoietic systems.
6. Other general disturbances.

These sections are sub-divided into chapters, for each of which one of the collaborators is responsible; it seems appropriate that the penultimate chapter should deal with senile changes in the eye and the last one with the eye at death. Systemic Ophthalmology thus gives a complete life history of what may happen to the eye, since the first chapter deals with concepts derived from experimental embryology.

One way of summing up one's reactions after reading this book is to adopt an Americanism and say that it constitutes a "must" so far as ophthalmic surgeons are concerned, and particularly for those who have to examine or lecture to students. Many examples could be quoted to show this, but two must suffice. The first concerns maternal rubella contracted during the first 4 months of pregnancy, which can produce, we are told, not only cataract in the offspring, but also buphthalmos and pigmented retinal change, in addition to various systemic disturbances such as deaf-mutism, microcephaly, mental retardation, dental anomalies, and heart disease, the chances in favour of these changes occurring being 3:1. The second example concerns allergy; we all have some general conception of this condition, but the whole matter is clarified when it is divided into five main groups, and emphasis placed upon the difference between
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reactions due to allergy and those due to immunity. The work of the Johns Hopkins Medical School on this subject is well known and the editor is fortunate in having Alan C. Woods as author of the chapter on Ocular Tuberculosis. This alone would justify the publication of Systemic Ophthalmology, but the other sections and chapters are also of a high standard and thus the best of recent publications in British and foreign ophthalmic journals, together with the original observations of the various contributors, are integrated into one volume.

The chapter dealing with organic affections of the central nervous system is well written and contains much useful information, e.g., a list of the causes of nystagmus, which number more than seventy! The neurologists who have written the chapter, however, probably do not realize that those who read it may be less familiar with the central nervous system than they are themselves, and a few diagrams such as are to be found in anatomy books would be helpful.

Professor Sorsby and his collaborators and publishers have certainly earned the appreciation and gratitude of English-speaking ophthalmologists in producing a work which is not only useful and of good format but serves to show how wide is our specialty. Coventry Patmore once wrote—not in reference to ophthalmology:

What in its ruddy orbit lifts the blood
Like a perturbed moon of Uranus
Reaching to some great world,
In ungauged darkness hid.

Systemic Ophthalmology would seem to lift our blood out of the orbit to provide means whereby we can gauge, at any rate, some of the darkness that lies beyond it.

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MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIPS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY AND OTOLOGY, 1952-53

The Medical Research Council invite applications for Travelling Fellowships in Ophthalmology and Otology for the academic year 1952-1953, for which special provision has been made by the Alexander Pigott Wernher Memorial Trustees. Under the terms of the bequest, the funds are to be applied "towards the prevention and cure of blindness and deafness in the United Kingdom and British Empire and in particular research in connection therewith by financing medical men and students within the Empire to study methods and practices in all countries of the world".

These fellowships are intended for suitably qualified medical graduates who are likely to profit by a period of work in ophthalmology or otology at a centre abroad before taking up positions for higher teaching and research in these branches of medical science. Candidates will be required to submit an outline of their proposals for study or research and to indicate their preference as to place of work. The awards will, as a rule, be tenable for one year.

The fellowships provide for the payment of stipend, together with an allowance for travelling and incidental expenses. The stipend will ordinarily be at the rate
kindness which had been shown them, having greatly enjoyed the natural beauties and quiet charm of this lovely island.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

President: - Dr. George Brew (Melbourne).
Vice-President: Dr. A. L. Tostevin (Adelaide).
Hon. Treasurer: Dr. A. E. F. Chaffer (Sydney).
Hon. Secretary: Dr. Arnold Lance, 135, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

The twelfth Annual Meeting will be held at Melbourne in August, 1952, in conjunction with the eighth session of congress of the British Medical Association in Australia.

Mr. F. W. Law, M.D., F.R.C.S., has been promoted to the rank of Commander (Brother), and Mr. H. B. Stallard, M.B.E., LL.D., M.D., F.R.C.S., to the rank of Officer (Brother) of the Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem.

OXFORD OPHTHALMOLOGICAL CONGRESS, 1952

The next meeting will be held in Oxford on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, July 3, 4, and 5, 1952. The Doyne Lecture will be delivered by Dr. Dorothy Campbell (Coventry). This year members will reside in Balliol College.

COMMONWEALTH AND EMPIRE HEALTH AND TUBERCULOSIS CONFERENCE, 1952

The third Commonwealth and Empire Health and Tuberculosis Conference will be held in London at the Central Hall, Westminster, from July 8-13, 1952. The first three days will be devoted to lectures and discussions, and the last three to visits to sanatoria, hospitals, and clinics. Further information may be had from the Secretary-General, National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

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