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each time I passed through his territory and, in a way, we have become real friends.

In a manner of speaking this old man is my local counterpart, and the last conversation we had together will stay with me to the end of my days. What he said to me was this: "Toubib, you have often expressed interest in the tools that I use for my work. I am too old now to go on. They will not be used again." I replied: "But what about Abd-el-Salaam, your son?" He said: "Toubib, he will not need them nor does he ask for them. He is going to the agriculture station to learn how to graft fruit trees in the new irrigation. My work is finished, but I am glad that yours has so well begun . . ." And he handed me the curious little iron tweezers I had so often admired on his shelf but had never seen him use.

Note on Overall Programme

The work described in the preceding paragraphs has formed part of the overall efforts of the United Nations and its related agencies to aid developing countries through the facilities of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and the Special Fund.

The Expanded Programme—the initial undertaking of the U.N. family on behalf of technical co-operation—was started fifteen years ago. Since then voluntary contributions amounting to more than $500 million from 119 governments have been used to assist some 150 countries and territories. More than 13,500 individual experts have worked in these developing areas on assignments ranging from several months to several years. In addition, fellowships permitting advanced study abroad have been awarded to more than 32,000 persons to help them carry forward the work begun by technical assistance advisers.

The United Nations Special Fund, set up in 1959, has concentrated on major projects designed to help developing countries attract new investment capital and achieve self-sustaining economic progress. It has given special attention to surveys of natural resources, to feasibility studies of industrial and agricultural potential, and improving facilities in the developing countries for manpower training and applied industrial research.

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The author's self-avowed aim in writing this book is to integrate the basic disciplines both with ocular diseases and abnormalities and with the ocular manifestations of systemic disease and it is gratifying to be able to say that in this he has succeeded admirably. The pattern of the work follows his aims in four well-balanced sections, the first on Basic Mechanisms, Anatomy, Embryology, Physiology and Pharmacology, the second on History-taking and Examination, the next on Diseases and Injuries of the Eyes, and the last and perhaps best of all on Systemic Diseases and the Eye. In this last section the chapters dealing with the relations of the eye to diseases of the central nervous system and to cardiovascular disease call for special approval.

Numerous works on ophthalmology of about this length have been published: so many that one wonders if there can be a profitable market for them all. The defect of many such is to dwell at inordinate length on the expert's arcana. This work does not. For example, the biomicroscope is mentioned only twice, once in connexion with specialized examination of the retina, elsewhere in connexion with applanation tonometry where it is illustrated. The technique of using the slit lamp is not described, nor perhaps should it be in a work of this size, but the indications are clearly
shown here and elsewhere of the more sophisticated techniques that are available; the glimpses given will not encourage the reader to feel that he has learned it all, but they will whet his appetite for more knowledge and explain to him why the expert, apart from the obvious factors of experience, has the edge in the management and interpretation of the more difficult cases.

For whom then is this work most suitable? The author in his preface says that it is intended for the student, both undergraduate and postgraduate. With the medical curriculum as it is in Great Britain, it is probably too long for the average undergraduate although it could well be recommended to those who confess to—no, proclaim—an interest in ophthalmology as a future career. It will stimulate them. Elsewhere its obvious and considerable value will be for those doing junior house-appointments in eye departments or hospitals, for those going into, or doing, general practice who wish to deal with their ophthalmic cases intelligently, and perhaps for selective reading for those who aspire to the heights of consulting medicine and neurology. It is one of the better introductions to ophthalmology and its production and format conform to the high standards we have so long associated with its publishers.


This book is not about vision. Even the eye is mentioned but in passing, more as a route to the author's focal plane of interest than as a sensory organ. The book is about the retina in general and its receptor system in particular (as emphasized in its sub-title) and follows the approach which most of biology has decided on to-day and all competent medicine will pursue tomorrow. The author attempts to apply molecular principles—he is a professor of biophysics—and to inquire into the question whether the stimulus of light plays in general upon a carotenoid organ with a relatively limited number of stops. Consequently his preview embraces chlorophyll as it does visual purple and the light reactions of Euglena gracilis as much as those of Drosophila melanogaster. There is no doubt that a book such as this has had to be written but, vast though his practical experience appears to be if one may judge by the references to his papers, one remains to be convinced that Prof. Wolken was the man to do it. His admirable experimental competence is adversely balanced by a certain naiveté, e.g. with respect to cyanopsin, and an enduring lack of criticism, more with respect to other people's work than his own. Nevertheless, the book contains accounts of many a pretty experiment and provides the inspiration for countless more.

The illustrations are largely first-rate. British eyes will need much tolerance for the new spelling: why carbon disulfide and not chlorofil? At nine dollars the book is cheap—probably because the publishers failed to heed the author's corrections in the proofs.


Scandinavian ophthalmology is renowned for its clarity, thoroughness, originality, and statistical excellence. In a symposium we do not expect reports on original work and we do not expect simple didactic lectures. Symposia should be controversial to stimulate discussion and thought. It is obvious, therefore, that with such ambitions few symposia should be published. Yet increasingly symposia are being presented as books that add nothing to the sum of human knowledge or that even have the usefulness of a text-book. We have come to expect so much of Nordic ophthalmology that we judge its products (perhaps unfairly) by the very highest standards, which these nineteen rather short lectures on retinal detachment with few exceptions do not really reach.


Cogan's previous text-book on the Neurology of the Ocular Muscles which appeared some years ago has been generally accepted as one of the most useful works on this aspect of neuro-ophthalmology; and to this the present book is a companion volume. The field of study is interpreted in its widest sense, embracing the ciliary epithelium (in dictyomas), the retina, the optic
nerve, and the higher visual pathways. Within this small book the entire range of neurological diseases affecting the visual system is covered, including the anatomy and physiology of each tissue—vascular diseases, inflammations, degenerations, tumours, and the effects of poisons and injuries. It is obvious that there is space for only the briefest description of the multitude of conditions which are included in this vast field, but most of the essential facts are presented in a highly concentrated manner backed by summaries of each chapter; the illustrations are copious and good and the large bibliography most useful. The book is not sufficiently detailed to provide the last word for the serious student, but for an introduction, a general survey, and a guide to further reading in the literature it is excellent.


This fascinating book is a record of a symposium on the physics, anatomy, and physiology of the blood vessels (not limited to ophthalmology). It is hoped that this discussion on the basic factors concerning the circulation will be followed by other symposia dealing with vascular disorders of the eye, a group of conditions which commonly cause severe visual disability and for which little can yet be done in practical management; if this materializes it will be a most excellent long-term programme sponsored by the National Institute of Health of the U.S.A. The data presented are of great interest and value and have already been published in Investigative Ophthalmology; to those who do not receive this journal, their publication in book form will be welcome.


Should anyone desire a practical guide to the diagnosis and treatment of all types of glaucoma, he could do little better than turn to this book written by two of the greatest experts on this disease in America, both of them of long experience and unusually sound judgment and justifiably enjoying a world-wide reputation. All the many manifestations of this complex disease, primary and secondary, are discussed, including its appearance in infancy and childhood, the clinical methods of examination, particularly and at length tonometry, tonography, and gonioscopy, the medical methods of therapy both emergency and long-term, and the indications for surgery and the complications that may arise therefrom. The surgeon who follows the teaching professed here cannot go far wrong.

But while the practice is excellent, there seems to be something wrong with the philosophy, for glaucoma in all its aspects is considered to arise from an elevation in the intra-ocular pressure, a feature determined solely by events in the eye to be treated locally. Thus, although the influence of a low diastolic blood-pressure or anaemia is noted, cupping of the disc and the loss of the visual field are essentially mechanical affairs; the daily variations in the ocular tension are due to a varying rate of formation of the aqueous humour of unknown cause and without neural control; a consensual fall of pressure in the fellow eye is due to evaporation from the cornea; the obstruction of the drainage channels in simple glaucoma is a complete enigma; angle-closure glaucoma depends entirely on pupillary block, while “low-tension” glaucoma depends on an abnormal sensitivity of the optic nervehead to pressure, although “defective circulation may conceivably be a factor in some cases”. A better concept of the disease will be obtained when ophthalmologists realize that the eye is part of the body and is apt to share in its sicknesses.


The 17th volume of “Advances in Ophthalmology”, edited by Sautter in Hamburg and Streiff in Lausanne, follows its usual format and maintains its accustomed usefulness. The first article by Papst and Rossmann of Hamburg deals with the aetiology of ptosis, myogenic, neurogenic, congenital, or traumatic. The second, by Vörösmarty of Dresden, deals with “oculopression”. This technique, usually carried out with massage by the fingers of the surgeon before operations such as cataract to lower the intra-ocular pressure, can be performed to a standard degree by a new instrument based on the principle of a pneumatic bellows. The final article is the résumé of a Symposium held at Basel on the various changes occurring in the ocular tissues in old age.