We cannot do better, in recommending the monograph to the profession, than quote the author's own hopes in publishing it, viz., that it will "stimulate thought, suggest new methods, and aid in the elucidation of some of the difficult problems of ocular refraction."

EUPHAN MAXWELL.

CORRESPONDENCE

WHAT IS AN "OPHTHALMOLOGIST"?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

SIR,—Your account of the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress of July last includes a paragraph that recalls a friendly controversy for which THE OPHTHALMOSCOPE of October and November, 1915, courteously provided a platform. If I may judge from the terms of your report, your editorial judgment, I fear, is against the position I strove to maintain in the earlier correspondence. Nevertheless, I could wish, with your permission, to re-state this position.

The paragraph now in question announces that in an arranged discussion the subject was treated by one member "from the point of view of the physician," and by another "from that of the ophthalmologist." What may be the exact editorial definition of the term "ophthalmologist" I, of course, may not presume to say, but plainly in the above statement the "physician" is excluded from its contents. The two names are placed in contrast as though they were mutually exclusive. My submission, on the contrary, is that the terms have no common measure and cannot therefore rightly be set in opposition the one to the other.

"Physician," as a descriptive title, admittedly indicates that its bearer is engaged in medical practice as a duly qualified medical practitioner, and no one other than a qualified medical practitioner may legally adopt it. But "ophthalmologist" suffers no such restraint or protection, and clearly, therefore, cannot appropriately be used as descriptive of the professional activities of a member of the medical profession. If, then, the term "ophthalmologist" is neither a safe nor an accurate professional label it must be open to anyone who professes or cultivates an interest in ophthalmology, and the suggestion of exclusion implied in your paragraph cannot be justified.

Now and again through your columns we learn of the various activities of the "Council of British Ophthalmologists," and I note as relevant to the present issue that not all of those who

carry on the work of this organisation are engaged in surgical practice. Further, members of the Council, while appearing (quite rightly as I think) as "ophthalmologists" when occupied with their special corporate responsibilities, do individually, in the volume where each member of the profession has the opportunity to describe the fashion of practice he follows, name themselves "surgeons" or "ophthalmic surgeons." The difference thus displayed exactly illustrates my submission that "ophthalmologist" stands with anatomist, botanist, physiologist, and similar terms as an index, not of professional activities, but of personal studies and interests. It is not a monopoly of those of a particular group of medical practitioners, nor, indeed, of the medical profession generally.

I am, Sir, Yours,

C. O. HAWTHORNE.

HARLEY STREET, W.1.,
September 16, 1922.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

SIR,—Your courtesy in showing us Dr. Hawthorne's letter affords us an opportunity of stating that the Council of British Ophthalmologists is composed solely of members of the Medical profession. From time to time, however, committees appointed by the Council have co-opted certain non-medical scientists, e.g., Sir Richard Tetley Glazebrook, and others, to give the Council the benefit of their advice in subjects in which their knowledge and experience are pre-eminent.

We are, Sir, Yours faithfully,

J. B. LAWFORDE, President,

M. S. MAYOU, Hon. Secretary,

Council of British Ophthalmologists.

59, HARLEY STREET,
October 19, 1922.

DICHOTOMY

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

SIR,—I received, not long ago, a letter enclosing a typed communication from an optician who writes from Gray's Inn Road, canvassing for work. The final paragraph of this letter runs as follows:—"Should it be your custom to receive a commission on each patient sent me, then I would be pleased to make it pay for your trouble and work to mutual advantage."