Vedjowski (Brno) reported his experience in the treatment of syphilitic ocular lesions by bismuth salts. He obtained good results in acute iritis, ophthalmoplegia interna and fundus lesions; in interstitial keratitis bismuth salts showed no superiority over older remedies.

The National Physical Laboratory

Through the courtesy of the Directors of the National Physical Laboratory the editors of this journal were able to be present at the inspection by the General Board on June 24. Although most of the routine optical work is done elsewhere some very interesting optical experimental work, as well as the testing of sextants and photographic lenses, is carried out at Teddington. For this purpose a constant temperature room, the cooling or heating of which is brought into play automatically by an electrical thermometer consisting of a fine grid of wires a little below the ceiling which is sensitive to 1/100th of a degree C. is provided. A series of experiments with a trichromatic colorimeter are being made with the view of setting up a series of colour standards expressed in terms of the eye. It is hoped that this will enable any colour to be expressed with absolute precision simply by quoting a reference number. We were very much impressed by a new form of flicker photometer in which measurements of extreme accuracy could be taken with great ease and rapidity. Unfortunately, it is not suitable for very low grades of illumination such as prevail in coal mines.

Outside the optical section there were many features of interest, notably the William Froude National Tank for the experimental working out of ship and propeller designs and the standard leading screw lathe. We are in sympathy with the opinion that has been frequently expressed that every ophthalmic surgeon should have a course of practical instruction in accurate physical measurement in a physical laboratory, and so acquire some idea of the practical difficulties that have to be met. We should not then meet with such farcical spectacle prescriptions as a cylinder of an eighth of a dioptre set at an angle of two and a half degrees, to take an extreme case once shown us by a patient.

Science and the Lay Public

The educated lay public in France is certainly better supplied with scientific papers in the Revue des Deux Mondes than is the British reader by any of his magazines of similar standing.
Possibly by training and mentality it is better able to appreciate scientific ideals, as such articles as some that have recently appeared would not be published in the absence of some demand. In the number for January 1 of the present year Emile Picard contributes an excellent paper on the theories of light and ether, which would probably convey some fresh information even to ophthalmic surgeons. Nordmann, the well-known astronomer, contributes a regular article once a month, dealing, and by no means always in an elementary fashion, with some scientific topic of current interest. Other scientific men of eminence in their own special lines also contribute from time to time. Possibly something of the same sort might prove successful in this country, and would, at any rate, provide some variation on the everlasting political papers, few of which show any evidence of scientific mentality, that fill the pages of our more serious monthly and quarterly journals.

ABSTRACTS

I.—TREATMENT


(1) Pollock, who has already written two articles on the subject of the medicinal treatment of cataract (Trans. Ophthal. Soc., 1915 and Glasgow Med. Jl., October, 1917), in the present article gives, in the first place, a comprehensive review of the very considerable literature on the subject, and, in the second place, an account of six cases treated by what has been called the alkaline method. It will be convenient to give Pollock’s conclusions first, since a very considerable amount of scepticism exists as to the possibility of curing cataract by this method.

“(1) Nearly all ophthalmic surgeons have seen at times traumatic cataract absorbed in part; and a certain number of cases of the spontaneous absorption of senile cataract are on record . . . . but the numerous cases which have been reported, especially during the last twenty years, show that the alkaline treatment of senile cataract has been used successfully, and that the results are not due to spontaneous absorption, nor to the clearing of vitreous or fundus opacities.