

wonderful organ is the eye. In no part of the body is that beautiful harmony of varied though concurrent actions, that adaptivity of diverse means to the accomplishment of a definite end, which continuing in undisturbed succession throughout ages, evidences the operation of Supreme wisdom, more markedly exhibited than in the apparatus of vision. A slight addition to, or subtraction from, the diameters of the eye; an opacity of the transparent membrane; a deficiency of the pigment; thickening of any of the several refracting humours; or absence of power in the muscles of the globe, would suffice to make it entirely unfit for the purposes for which it is intended. But, except as the result of diseased action, how seldom is there any deviation from the condition of normality—that typical state which was impressed upon it at the time when the mind of man first looked forth on the beauty of the world in which he was placed. As an optical instrument, the eye is the very perfection of compactness, power and efficiency. Spherical aberration is prevented by the convex cornea; and the different dispersive powers of the transparent structures serve in a measure to correct chromatic aberration.—How exquisite must be that arrangement by which it adapts itself to varying ranges of vision, and how inconceivably minute must the image of the separate portions of an extended landscape be upon the retina?

Possessing in its investments and appendages nearly all the kinds of tissues of which the body is made up, the pathology of the eye must necessarily be a subject of great interest to the medical practitioner. And so we find it has always been. The importance of unimpaired sight to an individual, and the sad condition of him from whom the light of heaven is shut out, assisted materially, no doubt, in attracting attention to the diseases of the eye. The circumstance, moreover, that these diseases are nearly all visible, and susceptible of direct examination, led to their early examination. As a speciality, ophthalmic surgery, according to our author, is not of modern date. It is coeval with the practice of medicine. “We find from Herodotus that Cyrus sent to Amasis, the King of Egypt, for an oculist. The Greeks and Romans had their oculists, as is evident, not only from their writings, but from the inscriptions on ancient marbles and seals. There is no doubt that oculists were at least as numerous in ancient Rome as in any modern city.”

Until the latter end of the eighteenth century, when Soemmering published his *Icones Oculi Humani*, ophthalmological literature was quite uncultivated. Since that time, this department of medical science has received, particularly from the German and British schools, a great deal of attention; and we now possess large and elaborate works on diseases of the eye, many of them containing excellent representations of the appearances presented by the organ under different pathological states.—The volume which now lies before us is a very excellent work on the