

## GLAUCOMA

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Doubtless all of us at times put to ourselves the query: Is glaucoma really a disease or only a symptom? and after years of experience have arrived at a definite conclusion satisfying our individual minds.

It occurred to me that the introduction of the query might bring about a beneficial discussion, because of any new facts which might be brought to light.

I still believe, as I stated in 1915, that the course of acute inflammatory glaucoma was and is as follows: Following a great shock, fear, or anxiety, there is extreme and exhausting demand on the thyroid and suprarenal glands, producing an ocular congestion which is first acute and later becomes stagnant, owing to an exhaustion of the glands and a lack of the substances in the blood which, through stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, produced the acute congestion. This is especially true in a vagotonic person.

Because of this conception seventeen cases of acute inflammatory glaucoma and one of double hemorrhagic glaucoma were relieved of all pain and increased tension within half an hour without operation by the use, hypodermically, of pilocarpin hydrochlorid, one-tenth grain, and adrenalin chlorid, ten drops of 1:1000 solution. Locally, one drop of eserine, one-half grain to the ounce, and dionin powder. Several only of these cases were later, because of the personal needs, such as remote residence, operated on when they had become quiet, the visual results being all one could desire.

I believe that chronic or simple glaucoma is a distinctive

syndrome, due to attrition, the underlying factors of which are predisposition of anatomic structure, angiosclerosis, including obliterating endarteritis and faulty metabolism, with a low metabolic rate induced by degenerating thyroid function, and a disordered vegetative nervous system. That operation is not indicated and that thyroid and calcium lactate, with sometimes belladonna tincture medication internally, together with pilocarpin and dionin locally, retains vision and sometimes improves it.

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CONCERNING A LAW TO LESSEN HEREDITARY  
BLINDNESS

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It seems worth while to call attention to the fact that we students of ophthalmology sometimes become so much interested in the causes and treatment of disease that we neglect its prevention.

We must understand at the outset that the term blindness is elastic. It does not necessarily mean a total loss of vision in both eyes; indeed, the globe of each may be comparatively perfect, but if, for example, complete ptosis exists, the person is practically blind. Blindness has been better defined as an impairment of vision sufficient to prevent the person from earning his living in competition with others who have normal vision.

Evidently it is impossible to give the exact number of the hereditary blind now in the United States. Authorities like Best place the total number called blind from all causes at about 110,000. In a bibliography of hereditary eye diseases published as Bulletin No. 21 by the Eugenics Record Office there is a list of 808 articles on hereditary defects of the eye,