CATARACT EXTRACTION

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

SIR,—I wish to call attention to some points arising out of the very interesting article by Major M. M. Cruickshank, I.M.S., on the complications following 4,000 cases of cataract extraction, mainly in the capsule, at Dr. H. T. Holland's clinic in Shikarpur, Sind, India, during the 1923, 1924 and 1926 seasons. In the section dealing with vitreous loss he asks "Is vitreous loss more liable to occur in the simple or in the combined operation?" and proceeds to give the following figures relating to this question :—

	Cases	Vitreous loss in	Per cent.
Complete iridectomy	650	85	13.08
Marginal iridectomy	144	0	—
Peripheral iridectomy	216	17	7.87
No iridectomy	240	19	7.91

He goes on to state "The marginal iridectomy was devised by Lt.-Col. Henry Smith and the majority of these cases were done by his son, Dr. J. R. Smith. . . . It is noteworthy that in no single instance where it was performed did vitreous escape." The reader is thus led to believe, unintentionally I am sure, that the absence of vitreous prolapse in these cases was in some way related to the type of iridectomy performed, whereas in fact it had nothing at all to do with it. It was due to the fact that I was using the technique for expressing the lens, described by Col. Smith in the *Arch. of Ophthal.*, No. 3, 1926. In this, by external pressure alone, the lens is made to "tumble," i.e., turn a somersault and come out lower edge foremost, the suspensory ligament remaining attached in the upper sector throughout the process until the lens is lying on the front of the cornea ready to be separated from its final attachments by passing the elbow of the squint hook under it along the wound.

In the section dealing with burst capsules Major Cruickshank quotes the same cases :—

	Cases	Burst capsules in	Per cent.
Complete iridectomy	650	41	6.30
Marginal iridectomy	144	0	—
Peripheral iridectomy	216	12	5.55
No iridectomy	240	9	3.75

Here again he discusses the relation of this complication to the type of iridectomy performed, whereas he omits to mention a factor which is in my opinion of infinitely greater importance—the size of incision used. In the cases done by myself, I paid particular

attention to making the incision of adequate size, *i.e.*, half the corneal circumference or a trace over rather than a trace under, and the influence of this can be seen in the fact that the 144 cases performed with a marginal iridectomy again escaped accident under this heading.

It would be interesting to learn how many operators by the capsulotomy method could report a series of 144 unselected cases dealt with *without accident on the operating table*, a matter in no way due to personal skill on the part of the operator—very far from it—but solely to the fact that with recent developments the technique of intracapsular extraction of cataract has been reduced to a simplicity which would hardly be credited by those who have not seen it with their own eyes.

Yours faithfully,

J. RUSSELL SMITH.

SIDCUP, KENT,
July 14, 1927.

NOTES

International Ophthalmological Council

THE Treasurer of the International Ophthalmological Council will be glad if any individuals who wish to subscribe to a fund for meeting the expenses of the Council will communicate with him, so that their names may be included in the first list of subscribers which will be published in a forthcoming number of the journal. Subscriptions on the part of individuals to this fund are entirely voluntary, and do not confer membership of the Congress. Institutes or societies subscribing £2 or more will receive a copy of the *Transactions* of the Amsterdam Congress of September, 1929.

Subscriptions should be sent to Mr. Leslie Paton, Treasurer of the International Ophthalmological Council, 29, Harley Street, W.1.

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North of England Ophthalmological Society

THE following are the officers of the North of England Ophthalmological Society for the Session 1927-28:—*President*: Mr. Thomson Henderson, Nottingham; *Vice-President*: Mr. D. Matheson Mackay, Hull; *Treasurer*: Mr. W. H. Kiep, Bradford; *Members of Council*: Mr. T. Louis de Courcy, Liverpool, Mr. W. Stirling, Manchester. The Secretary was re-elected (Mr. Percival J. Hay).