A CASE OF MICROPHTHALMOS

BY

P. SANDER, M.D.

PORT SAIID

On September 28, 1921, an Italian lady brought her daughter, aged 23 days, for my opinion about her eyes. A well-built and developed baby. The eyelids of both eyes presented nothing abnormal. They covered eyeballs of very small size, like large peas, about 9 mm. in diameter. Each eye had a small transparent cornea; they both were of the same size: not more than 4 mm. in the horizontal meridian and 2 mm. in the vertical. Through the cornea some bluish-grey material could be seen, but no anterior chamber, no pupil nor design of iris. The movements of both eyeballs, and the eyelids as well, as their sensibility did not show anything particular. The parents of the baby were young healthy people, without any physical defects. I have observed the child for about nine years. She developed into a pretty looking girl of a gay and lively disposition and not lower in intelligence than the average child of her age. Her eyes did not grow bigger, but the corneae became rather smaller and less transparent than during infancy. The child does not see the brightest light.

A curious family history was told me by the mother of the child. Some 20 months previously to the birth of the child, being in the second month of her first pregnancy, she had occasion to watch the operation on her own mother for acute glaucoma. The operation ended in a catastrophe: copious escape of vitreous and
subsequent loss of the eye. The young woman was badly impressed and in a short time developed a sort of fixed idea, that the child, which she was carrying, would have something wrong with its eyes. I heard afterwards from several persons, and from friends of the lady, confirmation of this part of her history: being pregnant, she often expressed apprehensions for the eyes of her future child. In due time she gave birth to a baby who "had no eyes." Under the eyelids, which could be opened well, only "flesh" was seen. There were no other deformities. The child died from an acute infection. The same apprehension haunted her during the whole of her second pregnancy, which ended in the birth of the present child. She has had no other children.

A FAMILY AFFECTED WITH KERATOCONUS AND ANTERIOR POLAR CATARACT

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In 1927, I had occasion to examine the eyes of a family consisting of the father, aged 70 years, and three unmarried daughters, aged 20, 26 and 30 years. These people, of Maltese nationality, presented some features of physical and intellectual defectiveness. They were anaemic, of poor stature, with unhealthy grey skin of their faces carven with comedones and boils, saddle-shaped noses, badly developed teeth. They all showed different degrees of varying sequelae of long standing and neglected trachoma and its complications: shrinkage of the eyelids, entropion, vascularization and scars of the cornea, stenosis of ductus nasolacrimalis, etc. The two youngest had well pronounced symptoms of atrophic rhinitis, especially the youngest one—with formation of foul crusts. All of them were bearers of a curious combination of keratoconus and anterior polar cataract in each eye. They were all short sighted in different degrees—between -5.0 D. sph. and -20.0 D. sph., with low V. A., which could not be improved with glasses to an appreciable amount. In both younger girls keratoconus, although well pronounced, was not highly developed, no deep corneal opacities were present but polar cataract of small size—like a pin head. In all four eyes of these two girls there were a certain amount of dust-like opacities, scattered in all layers of the lenses seen in the Zeiss-Czapsky's microscope with slit-lamp illumination; but in one girl only there was more or less marked deposit of white matter, which could be considered as an