

In the last stage of the operation (Diagram 3) the Snellen's sutures are tied in the usual way over a small piece of rubber, the lifting sutures are fastened above the eyebrow by two strips of adhesive plaster, and the triangular skin excision is sutured. The lateral sutures are removed on the fifth day, the Snellen's and lifting

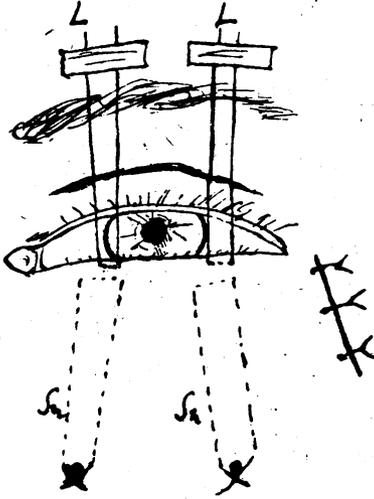


DIAGRAM 3.

Skin lifted by the marginal sutures LL. Tarsus drawn down by the Snellen sutures Sn Sn. Szymanowski excision sutured.

sutures are left three or four days longer to make sure that the tarsus has become attached to the skin-muscular layer at a lower level. The lid lifting sutures should not be allowed to cut through. If they are likely to do so, they have to be removed. This inconvenience may be avoided by not pulling the threads too taut when fastening them to the skin of the forehead.

ANNOTATION

Fees

From the ophthalmological point of view a fee is a reward for professional services and we need not consider the meaning of the word with regard to feudal land tenure, or that of a tribute to a superior. It is of interest to note that the shorter Oxford Dictionary gives, amongst other meanings, "payment to a public officer (? orig. one who held his office in fee) for the execution of his functions,

1450; hence, professional or other remuneration, 1583." Johnson alludes to payments to members of the legal and medical profession. But while fees to lawyers are largely fixed in amount those to members of our profession are much more elastic. We think it would not be in the best interests of the profession for fees to be standardized by law. They have for years been largely a matter of custom, and while there have been occasions in which a member of the community may have undercut his professional brethren in the neighbourhood in the matter of fees, he does not, in the long run do himself much lasting good. We have always thought that one should be able to charge what fees one likes without incurring the odium of the rest of the profession. If a patient cannot afford full fees we never hesitated to take their word for it and to make reductions.

One supposes that one gets taken in occasionally, but taken as a whole the vast majority of patients meet their obligations in an exemplary manner. Some there are who never mean to pay their fees. As a general rule these are not worth powder and shot, and that is why so few of such cases appear in the courts. It would have puzzled the most astute of lawyers to have got a fee out of Mr. Harold Skimpole; and that type of character is more likely to try and obtain a loan from his doctor than to think of paying his just debts. Our own most amusing experience in the matter of fees was in our very early days when we were consulted by a neurasthenic curate. He took up a lot of our time and was obviously very absent minded. When he came to settle up he produced an envelope, saying "I believe your fee is two guineas." Being a parson's son, we always let the junior members of the cloth down lightly, so we said, "yes, but in the case of the Clergy we usually make a reduction to one guinea." He was profusely grateful and removed what we imagined was one of the guineas; but on inspecting the contents of the envelope after he had gone we found that he had abstracted the pounds and left us with a couple of shillings, and we had not sufficient moral courage to pursue him down the street to point out his mistake.

On another occasion the wife of a patient, whom we always saw at half rates, brought a friend to see us. She was dressed very poorly and appeared to be far from affluent, and we thought we were lucky to get our half fee, until we came to show them into the street, when the patient got into one of the largest motor cars we have ever seen and was driven serenely off by a chauffeur in uniform.
