

CORRESPONDENCE

FILMS OR PAPERS

To the Editorial Committee of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

SIRS—A continental ophthalmic surgeon of world-wide repute was heard to say, while crossing the Atlantic to attend the XVII International Congress, that in his opinion the modern cinema film was the best form of communication to a polyglot audience. There was little doubt that it was the most popular, because at the Congress, in the room set apart for projection of films there was seldom an empty seat, whereas in the other rooms where papers were being read, attendance was as a rule noticeably sparse.

Memories are short however. Although one may come away from the film show with a clear idea of how to perform whatever surgical procedures have been shown, the idea is considerably less clear, when some months later the occasion arises to put the procedures into practice.

Our own *Transactions* print only a list of films shown with the names of exhibitors. The same is true of the international *Acta*, though those who were fortunate enough to attend the Congress obtained in their programme, short abstracts of the films. These were an improvement on having just a list, but how much better it would be, if it were possible to publish an illustrated account of the operation, such as the author would have given had he been describing it in a paper.

Although a film may take only a short time to show, it is probable that the exhibitor has expended much time, thought, and money over its production and he should be rewarded with something more than a mere mention of his name and the title of his film.

As things are at present, the showing of a film precludes the exhibitor from giving a printed description of it, which is why this letter is headed "films or papers". One would prefer to be able to substitute "and" for "or", which would be fairer to the exhibitor and more informative to those who were members of the Congress.

Yours faithfully,
F. A. WILLIAMSON-NOBLE

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LONDON, W.1.
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BOOK REVIEWS

Cataract Surgery. Its Evolution and Practice. By N. K. Bidyadhar, 1955. Pp. 324, 33 figs, bibl. Orissa, India. (30s.).

As the author states in the title of this book, it is concerned not only with the practice of cataract surgery, but also with its evolution.

He claims that cataract surgery was performed in India as early as 4,500 B.C. The great man of this age was Suśruta, who advocated aseptic and antiseptic methods and produced anaesthesia in his patients by inhalation of a substance called Sāmmohini before performing the operation of couching in the old and needling in the young. It is