APPLIANCES

THE VALUE OF A GLUCK'S METALLIC POST-OPERATIVE EYE SHIELD*

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A woman aged 75 underwent a right intracapsular extraction at my hands on March 21, 1959. The technique comprised two iridotomies, and the wound was closed by corneo-corneal sutures.

Because of her advanced age and rather poor intelligence, it was felt advisable to protect the eye post-operatively by a Gluck's aluminium eye shield, with a small gamgee patch beneath it. Plastic shields are employed in the majority of my cases, the uglier metal shield being reserved for those where trouble is expected.

The day after operation, the patient elected to get out of bed for no apparent reason at the very moment when the nurse was treating a patient in the next ward. No clear account is available of what next occurred, but presumably she must have fallen, and hit the door frame with the shield covering her operated eye. She was found with her head lying in a spectacular pool of blood from a 4 cm. long wound in the temporal part of her right eyebrow (Fig. 1). This cut was caused by the edge of the metallic shield which, as shown in Fig. 2, had a deep dent down the centre.

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To my amazement the only ocular damage was an iris prolapse at the area where two sutures had given way (Fig. 3).

The prolapse was reduced and two sutures placed. The wound healed, but the iris remained enclaved at one point. In spite of an unpleasing appearance the visual result is satisfactory (Fig. 4).

Discussion

The only interest of the case is in proving the value of this form of metallic shield, which saved the eye from destruction. Had the edge of the shield been blunted or covered with some soft material the eyebrow wound could have been minimized. This, however, could not have been achieved by a large cotton wool pad under the shield, as the value of the latter depends upon its close fit to the malar, frontal, and nasal bones to which (rather than the eye) any pressure on its anterior surface is immediately transmitted.

When the other eye was treated for cataract at a later date, two of these shields (one on top of the other) were fastened carefully over the eye, and fortunately no further accident occurred.

Summary

Although badly dented, a Gluck’s aluminium eye shield saved an operated eye from a heavy blow. This type of shield is now being used in all the author’s cases.