CORRESPONDENCE

CONJUNCTIVAL LESIONS

To the Editorial Committee of the British Journal of Ophthalmology

Sirs,—Your attention is invited to a case report on "Conjunctival Pockets", by Dr. S. Ayoub of Egypt (Brit. J. Ophthal., 1963, 47, 126). The author is to be complimented on drawing attention to a condition which, though not uncommon, is seldom mentioned in the literature, and then under various names.

Herbert (1901), working in South India, used the term 'conjunctival bridge'. The condition had been noted by Harlan and de Schweinitz (1896) and fully described by Schapriniger (1899), but because it was mistakenly thought to be a congenital anomaly, was mentioned by Duke-Elder (1938) in the section on developmental and congenital anomalies of the conjunctiva as "Epitarsus".

Singh and Grover (1960), working in the rural areas of Northern India, described with seven black-and-white and seven kodachrome pictures a variety of cases of epitarsus and allied post-inflammatory conjunctival adhesions and scarring. They gave the prevalence of epitarsus as roughly 1 in 200 persons in the vast regions of the world where living standards are poor and trachoma is endemic, and described its pathogenesis, clinical manifestations, differential diagnosis (especially from trachomatous scarring of the conjunctiva), and treatment. They urged that the text-books of ophthalmology should mention this condition in discussing the complications or sequelae of neglected acute conjunctivitis.

Yours faithfully,

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REFERENCES


BOOK REVIEWS

Blackie, London. (75s.)

This text, designed for the advanced physics student, presents a comprehensive survey of all the important aspects of physical and geometrical optics. Much of the detail will be beyond the requirements of the ophthalmologist, but it is most valuable to have in one volume such a detailed and clear exposition of the scientific basis of much of our practice. It is fascinating to see how so much of the work devoted to physical optics takes us into the heart of present-day theory of the nature of matter and its inter-relationship with radiation. The classical geometrical optics is, however, by no means neglected, and
up-to-date features are included in such chapters as those on optical instruments and their limitations. There is no doubt that this book is essential to every ophthalmic library.


It is remarkable that the benign symptom of pupillotomy which has been related by Adie and others to the decrease or loss of periosteal and tendon reflexes has launched such a large amount of literature. In a monograph, a second edition of which has now appeared, the late Prof. Kyrielleis has given a clear, critical, exhaustive, and interesting survey of the syndrome without adding much new to our knowledge of this condition. It seems that the affection is far from rare, especially when the atypical forms are also considered. There are many different more or less hypothetical explanations of the pupillotonic symptom. The only existing pathological-anatomical examination points to the destruction of the cells in the ciliary ganglion as a possible cause. This, however, cannot account for the loss of the reflexes in the lower extremities. The aetiology also remains unknown. The author suggests that the syndrome is due to a hereditary dysfunction of the tonus regulations in the mesencephalon. It seems that this region is at present the favoured localization for disturbances of which the genesis is so far unknown.


This book is in many ways unique and in many ways fascinating. It might be thought that its subject—epibulbar and palpebral tumours—is constricted, but the number and variety of neoplastic lesions which may be found in this small region of the body are extraordinary. The arrangement of the subject matter is interesting. The first chapter by L. T. Jones, deals with the anatomy and physiology of the ocular appendages. Five chapters deal with the different classes of tumours found in this area, and a final chapter with the various methods of treatment. Each of the descriptive chapters opens with a general introduction which is followed by a fully-annotated and lavishly-illustrated atlas showing the clinical appearances and pathology of the various neoplasms, most of which are derived from the author's wide experience. The arrangement is very informative and interesting and the illustrations are unusually good.


The morphological basis of embryological development has long been generally understood with a considerable degree of precision, but the rationale of the elaborate changes that occur each in its proper sequence and the influences controlling these events are as yet largely unknown. It is true that in a general sense we consider that they are effected by chemical organizers determined by induction and controlled by gradients; but these are somewhat nebulous concepts not yet integrated into a unitary scheme. This is the task of the experimental morphologist to-day and the most obvious approach is the study of the behaviour of explants in isolation or in a new environment in the embryo, so that the mutual interactions of tissues can be studied (the influence of the lens on the developing retina, of the mesenchyme on the pigmentary epithelium, and so on); and for this purpose the eye-rudiments of the larval amphibian has for some time provided the most useful material. Such experiments are being conducted on a considerable scale in Russia, and this summary of the results obtained in the laboratory of Prof. Lopashov, now available in English, will be read with interest. It is true that no final assessment of the operative factors has yet been reached, or indeed is yet in sight, but this book is a valuable summary, although perhaps not always easy to read, of work of considerable interest which has not so far been easily available in this country.