

**CLINICAL
DEMONSTRATIONS ON
OPHTHALMIC SUBJECTS**

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Clinical Demonstrations on Ophthalmic Subjects by J. R. Wolfe

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BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.



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TRANSPLANTATION OF CONJUNCTIVA
FROM THE
RABBIT TO THE HUMAN SUBJECT.

(From the *PRACTITIONER*, January, 1884.)

IN a notice of my work on "Diseases and Injuries of the Eye,"¹ which appeared in the *Practitioner*, the reviewer expressed a desire for more information as to the transplantation of conjunctiva from the rabbit, to which the attention of the profession had been drawn by the cases exhibited by me at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association in Edinburgh in 1875. I cannot help complying with the desire thus expressed, by giving a short record of successful cases of this operation and presenting it in its new phases, along with other original contributions to ophthalmology.

Of all the various injuries of the eye, burns of the conjunctiva have been considered the most tantalising and unsatisfactory to deal with. When the whole cornea has been rendered opaque, the

¹ Churchill, 1882.

case is hopeless, and there is an end to all surgical interference. But in cases in which the cornea has escaped, or is only partially implicated in the injury, and the burn is principally confined to the conjunctival sac, there is adhesion of the lid to the eyeball (symblepharon), and we have a difficult problem to solve. The condition of things is as follows:—The lower lid, generally, and sometimes also the upper, is adherent to the eyeball, which is covered and rendered immovable. Immobility of the globe and inability to raise the lid takes place even when the conjunctiva of the upper lid is not implicated in the burn.

Here, then, we have an eye, which is otherwise useful or capable of being rendered tolerably so, but which is tied down—buried, as it were—under an adherent lid, and rendered immovable. All the contrivances resorted to by surgeons to separate the lids from the globe have proved a mere waste of ingenuity—have, in other words, ended in disappointment. Impelled by a feeling of perplexity, and a conviction that something might be done to save such eyes—to bring them to the light of day, and restore their mobility—I tried to fill up the lacuna by conjunctiva from the rabbit.

The result of my first operation was submitted to the Glasgow Medico-Chirurgical Society in December 1872, and at the meeting of the British Medical Association held in Edinburgh in August 1875, I exhibited two cases.

CASE I. was that of a boy aged nine, who had had his right eye burnt with lime. The whole conjunctiva and also the greater part of the cornea was implicated. Having first made an artificial pupil, and thus restored some measure of sight to the eye, I then operated for the cure of symblepharon by transplantation. The patient was exhibited ten days after the operation, when some of the ligatures still remained in the conjunctiva. It could thus be seen that some portions of the transplanted membrane had assumed a pinkish appearance, while other spots had still a greyish look. This was a case particularly favourable for demonstration. Fig. 1 shows the extent of the injuries done by the

FIG. 1.



burn to the conjunctiva and cornea, and the sight and mobility restored by the operation. It shows also the position of the ligatures in the transplanted membrane.

CASE II.—The second case which I exhibited at the meeting was that of Peter Campbell, quarryman, then aged twenty-two, who had received an injury in his face and eyes from an explosion of gunpowder in January, 1872. His whole face was riddled by the powder. His left eye was completely closed by symblepharon and the greater part of its cornea burned. Both the upper and lower lids of the right eye were completely everted and adherent and the cornea ulcerated by exposure. In the