

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

ATTIC SUPPURATION

TO THE EDITOR, *The Journal of Laryngology and Otology*.

DEAR SIR,

With reference to Mr. F. McGuckin's paper on Attic Suppuration (Vol. lxiv, November 1950, p. 693), the author clearly knows what he is talking about, although he maintains that "there ain't no such thing" as epitympanic cholesteatoma. The latter, in my view, invades the space of Prussak along a primordial track homologous with the swim-bladder of *Mormyrus*, penetrating as far as the vicinity of the semicircular canals. In consequence, encysted mucocoeles of the mastoid cells undergo lipid degeneration. Finally, the sac ruptures and septic complications are not long delayed. The condition tends to be bilateral, is independent of the grade of pneumatization, and the first symptoms or signs may arise from decomposition of the contents of the sac and from a sentinel polypus, attached to the neck of the malleus, or to the notch of Rivinus, at the mouth of the sac. Of all forms of chronic otitis media this is the most serious if neglected but—taken early—the most hopeful for surgery. The patient may be reluctant to submit to operation, when the hearing is good and the inconvenience slight, but if he delays, the gloomy prognosis "Once a cholesteatoma always a cholesteatoma" may be fulfilled.

Mr. McGuckin is to be congratulated upon an excellent paper, but "*wir glauben dasz wir schieben und wollen nicht begreifen dasz wir geschoben werden*". Morbid anatomy and histology having failed to answer the riddle, it is logical to turn to comparative anatomy, as did Harvey at Padua, for a solution.

Yours faithfully,

W. O. LODGE.