

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE ANATOMY OF THE FACIAL NERVE

TO THE EDITOR,

The Journal of Laryngology and Otology.

IN his paper "The Cochlear Nerve and the Vascular Theory of Nerve Deafness", Mr. Asherson states, "The facial nerve must have been affected at its descending part, where it runs down *vertically* posterior to the posterior wall of the osseous meatus."

This erroneous statement is constantly found in English descriptions of the course of the facial nerve, when the truth is that while the descending portion of the facial nerve is vertical in a sagittal section, it is very often oblique in a coronal section, the Aquæductus Falopii passing downwards and outwards from the inner tympanic wall to the stylomastoid foramen. This can be verified in a number of temporal bones, by passing a straight wire into the stylomastoid foramen and if the bone is held vertically the wire is seen to pass upwards and inwards in the Aquæductus Falopii.

This is a point of great practical importance in operative procedures on the mastoid and middle ear and yet is never mentioned in English anatomical descriptions.

Politzer (1909) describes this and says: "A vertical line projected from the stylomastoid foramen would almost touch the middle of the inferior wall of the meatus."

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REFERENCE

POLITZER (1909). *Diseases of the Ear*, London.