

TRACHOMA

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

SIR,—In the February number of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY you publish a number of abstracts on trachoma amongst which are two on the work of Noguchi, Posey, and others on trachoma amongst the Indians of the South-West of America. Noguchi has apparently isolated, cultivated, and inoculated an organism which produces a condition exactly similar to the trachoma found amongst American Indians, but the histological appearance of the trachoma amongst the American Indians and the inoculated conjunctiva in monkeys and anthropoid apes differs considerably from the histological appearance of trachoma as found in this country, and in emigrants to this country from Europe. The principal difference is that the follicles in American Indian trachoma consists almost entirely of epithelioid cells surrounded by a comparatively small ring of lymphocytes. Although one or two epithelioid cells are usually found in follicles showing advanced changes in European trachoma, the follicles are made up of lymphocytes and plasma cells, most of the latter of which are in a state of degeneration. The infiltration and follicular formation also seems to be much more discrete than is found in European trachoma. It is rather suggestive that there is more than one form of infection which causes the disease. So far Mr. McCartney, Research Bacteriologist to the Metropolitan Asylums Board, has been unable to isolate the Noguchi organism, although in one case a somewhat similar organism was found, but it did not yield agglutination test with the blood serum from trachomatous cases.

Yours truly,

M. S. MAYOU.

LONDON,
2nd February, 1928.

OBITUARIES

BASIL THORN LANG, M.A., B.Ch.Cantab., F.R.C.S.Eng.

BASIL THORN LANG was the only son of Mr. William Lang, Consulting Surgeon to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, and Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Middlesex Hospital. He was educated at Abbotsholme, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1902 with First Class Honours in

the Natural Science Tripos, and completed his general medical education at St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Following in the footsteps of his father he specialized in ophthalmology, working as Clinical Assistant at Moorfields, and first as Clinical Clerk and later as Ophthalmic House Surgeon at St. Bartholomew's. In order to gain operative experience he went to India for six months and worked under Colonel Henry Smith at Jullundur and under Colonel Elliot at Madras, and became a skilled and dexterous operator. At the outset of the War he at once joined the R.A.M.C. and served practically continuously in France throughout the War. During the earlier period he devoted his energies to X-ray work, and by means of his brilliant inventive gifts combined with his intimate technical knowledge he devised and had built in France the first mobile X-ray unit for use in the front areas. When the King met with his serious accident, Lang and his unit were immediately sent for to X-ray His Majesty. Shortly after this he had an accident which was followed by a serious illness and in consequence he was invalided home for several weeks: he probably never completely recovered. On returning to duty he became Ophthalmic Specialist and did valuable work both at Rouen and Etaples. After the War he was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the Western Ophthalmic Hospital and Lang Research Scholar, Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, posts which he held till his election to the staff of the latter in 1920.

Any mere summary of his medical achievements gives no clue to his versatility. Having a broad grasp of the principles of physics as well as a gift for constructive detail, he understood the working of motor-cars, the telephone, the wireless, etc., as well as the various optical instruments. He enthusiastically welcomed any clever new invention—and he himself devised many—several of which he patented, one of the most notable being a long distance range-finder.

As an Ophthalmic Surgeon he had original methods both of treatment and operating and showed considerable resource, but he had not attained to that quality of judgment which made his father so deservedly sought after both as a clinician and a consultant. He devised several ingenious ophthalmic instruments, chiefly various forms of perimeter and an operating lamp, and he delighted in any new type of apparatus which extended to the ophthalmic surgeon further powers of observation. His book "The Routine Examination of the Eye" (an amplified edition of his father's excellent handbook "The Methodical Examination of the Eye"), and his papers on perimetry and scotometry all show his capacity for observation and originality of thought.

He was one of the most generous of souls; no trouble was too great for him to take to help a friend and he took endless pains

with the juniors who came to work in the clinic to make the hard places of ophthalmology seem easy. He was always willing to impart his knowledge to others.

Basil Lang was married only eleven months ago and all who knew him will offer his widow, his father, and sister their deep sympathy in the irreparable loss they have sustained.

PROFESSOR HJALMAR AUGUST SCHIØTZ, M.D.

ON November 30, 1927, Professor HJALMAR AUGUST SCHIØTZ was attacked by cerebral haemorrhage, while engaged in the task of adjusting a series of new tonometers. He died on December 8, without having regained consciousness.

Hjalmar Schiøtz was born on February 9, 1850, in Stavanger, Norway. As late as Thursday, November 24, at the Oslo Ophthalmological Association, he delivered, in his lucid and comprehensive style, a demonstration-lecture on the laws governing the movements of the skiascopic shadows.

Hjalmar Schiøtz had an extensive general medical education, previous to devoting himself to the science of ophthalmology. After qualifying in 1877, he went through assistant duty at different hospital-divisions and with a private practitioner in Brevik. Subsequently he worked abroad, first at Vienna, where he stayed for half a year with Arlt; and secondly, at Paris, where he stayed for one and a half years and became *Directeur adjoint* at the ophthalmological laboratory of the Sorbonne for a period of about one year, under the supervision of Emile Javal. This co-operation, termed by Javal himself as *les plus meilleurs jours dans ma vie*, proved to be of great importance for Schiøtz. Together they designed the well-known apparatus for ascertaining the corneal astigmatism. For a considerable period, however, it carried Javal's name only. Due, none the less, to his reference to the co-operation—the mathematical part of it being mainly the work of Schiøtz—made at the Tenth International Ophthalmological Congress in Lucerne, 1904, where an improvement of the instrument was demonstrated, the apparatus was finally to become generally known under the joint names of both designers. In 1881, Schiøtz returned to Christiania, now Oslo. During the next three years he was Clinical Chief at Surgical Section B. of the Government Hospital and later he was the head of the Surgical Policlinique. At that time Division B. had surgical and ophthalmological service in common. His senior was Professor Johan