WILLIAM ADAMS FROST (1853—1935)
OBITUARY

WILLIAM ADAMS FROST

One of the very small band of original members of the Ophthalmological Society died on October 25, in the person of Mr. Frost. It is nearly 30 years since he retired from practice and to most of the younger members of the profession he was merely a name. But, in his day, he was one of the best known members of the ophthalmic circle and his work as librarian of the society from 1885 to 1906 should not be forgotten.

Born in 1853, Mr. Frost was the son of Charles Maynard Frost, a surgeon in practice in Ladbroke Square. He was educated at the Kensington Grammar School and entered St. George’s Hospital in 1870. As a student he had a successful career and was a prizeman of the school in 1874, in which year he took his qualification and was house surgeon to the hospital, his colleague in office being the late Sir William Bennett.

After his term as house surgeon was over he became a clinical assistant at the Central London Ophthalmic Hospital, and having taken his F.R.C.S.Eng. in 1878, he succeeded McHardy as Ophthalmic Registrar at St. George’s. At this time Brudenell Carter had been in sole charge of the ophthalmic department for some years, and in 1881 Frost was elected Assistant Ophthalmic Surgeon to St. George’s. In 1883, he joined the staff of the Royal Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital, and he was also for some years ophthalmic surgeon to the Victoria Hospital for Children. He won the Middlemore Prize of the British Medical Association in 1882 and again in 1886.

On Mr. Carter’s resignation of the Senior post in 1892, Frost naturally succeeded to the vacancy. He had served as junior for eleven years, and though Carter may not have been an easy person to work with at all times the pair got on capitally. Frost himself recorded his gratitude to Carter in his obituary notice of his old chief. The two were very different. Carter, with his incisive tongue and brilliant literary qualities, did not suffer fools gladly and in his teaching, was, as Frost said, apt to assume a knowledge of the subject on the part of his audience, which was seldom as great as he seemed to imagine. Frost, on the other hand, was an excellent teacher of elementary matters, best in the wards and outpatient department, where an occasional humorous sally would enliven the discourse; but as a lecturer his rapid delivery made his remarks less stimulating. Mr. Frost retired from practice in 1906 and went to live at Forest Row in Sussex; but he served
during the latter part of the war as visiting ophthalmic surgeon to the London County War Hospital at Epsom.

A professional man's career is not always helped by the possession of private means, but in Frost's case this enabled him to do very good service to the profession apart from his position as surgeon and teacher. His Fundus Oculi, published in 1896, was for years the best atlas on the market and it has been used for teaching all over the world. In the preparation of this work he had the assistance of Mr. A. W. Head and the plates, reproduced by colour lithography, are still, in the opinion of many, the finest plates of the fundus that have ever been produced. At present the atlas has been superseded by drawings, made with the electric ophthalmoscope, which show up the finer details which escaped notice 40 years ago, but in its day Frost's Atlas was {	extit{facile princeps}}.

With Carter he wrote a small handbook of ophthalmology which was published in Cassell's Clinical Manuals series in 1887, and he contributed a chapter to his brother-in-law, Mr. H. E. Juler's, Ophthalmic Science and Practice.

Frost's ophthalmoscope is a beautiful instrument. It is rather more complicated in structure than that designed by Morton, having two wheels set close together by which the batteries of + and − lenses are moved to the sight hole.

Early in 1918 Frost had the misfortune to lose an eye from secondary glaucoma; later the remaining eye was affected with primary glaucoma, which, in spite of treatment, left him very gravely handicapped. He was a pathetic figure at Hospital gatherings, at which he was a very regular attendant until quite recently. An old friend used generally to come with him to lead him about. But in spite of his handicap Frost was always cheery. In middle age he was fond of riding and he had several rather bad accidents; apart from these he had good health and enjoyed a game at golf.

The writer was his last House Surgeon but one in the spring of 1906. He would like to record here his appreciation of Frost's great ability and kindness.

British ophthalmology will wish to express their sincere sympathy with Mrs. Frost, his partner in married life for more than 54 years, in her bereavement.

Mr. Harold Grimsdale writes:—

The death of my old colleague Mr. Adams Frost removes almost the last of the original members of the Ophthalmological Society. I had the honour and pleasure of working with him as clinical assistant and afterwards as assistant surgeon for fifteen years, and it was due to his encouragement that I became interested in
Ophthalmology. It was always a pleasure to work with him; he was so keen in everything that he undertook, and so long as his assistants were keen also he would spare no pains in his endeavour to help them. He loved teaching and so long as he was on the Staff no student at St. George's could fail to learn the most important elements of ophthalmic surgery. He did not write much; his book on the Fundus with illustrations by A. W. Head was his chief contribution to ophthalmic literature; the little text-book for students, which he wrote in collaboration with Brudenell Carter was never so well known as it deserved to be. His model artificial eye for teaching the use of the ophthalmoscope is very efficient for its purpose, more so than any other that I am acquainted with. Frost's keenness went beyond his work; he was an enthusiastic cyclist and, later, motorist; he hunted, he golfed, he played bridge, he enjoyed all that he did. It was a tragedy that in the last years of his life, he who had done so much to help the sight of others, should himself become blind, but he faced this calamity with patient courage.

The position of the specialists to St. George's Hospital, when Frost was appointed ophthalmic surgeon, was an anomalous one; they were elected by the Medical Committee as lecturers in their specialty, and then appointed by the Hospital Board to look after the cases referred to them by the surgical and medical staff. This appointment was for five years, at the end of which term they were eligible for re-election. It was during Frost's term of office and largely as a result of his personality that this anomaly was ended, and the specialists became a recognized part of the Hospital staff.

DR. CLARENCE LOEB

We were sorry to see an obituary notice of Dr. Loeb in the October number of the Amer. Jl. of Ophthal. Our readers will, we think, be interested in a short abstract of this notice, for Dr. Clarence Loeb's name was very well known in this country.

Dr. Loeb was born in 1876 and received his training at the University of Missouri, where he graduated M.A. in 1897. Two years later he graduated in medicine from the Marion Sims College and after holding the usual appointments in the St. Louis City Hospital, he came to Europe for post-graduate ophthalmological study in Berlin and Vienna.

On his return to the States he was appointed Ophthalmic Surgeon to his old hospital and later became Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology in the St. Louis University.

Dr. Loeb's literary alibity was well known and was such that he was, for many years, Associate Editor of the Amer. Jl. of