OBITUARY

GAS INFECTION

To the Editor of The British Journal of Ophthalmology.

Dear Sir,—I see that Captain Pringle in his interesting paper on Gas Infection of the Cornea, published in your last number, draws attention to the absence of previously recorded cases of a similar nature; I assume that he is referring to cases which have occurred during the war; the subject of Gaseous Panophthalmitis is one to which I drew attention some years ago, and I believe that I am correct in stating that I was the first in this country to record such cases.

In the Transactions, Ophthalmological Society, U.K., Vol. XXX, p. 179, will be found a short article, in which I gave the clinical history, and an account of the bacteriology of my first case of gaseous panophthalmitis, which occurred in 1909, while in the Ophthalmic Review, Vol. XXIX, p. 161, will be found the record of my second case. At the end of this second paper will be found references to similar cases in the literature, which were all that I could find at that time. In each of my cases the bacteriology of the condition was worked out by Dr. Charles Slater, now Consulting Bacteriologist to St. George’s Hospital; I was not so fortunate as Captain Pringle in being able to watch the development of gas bubbles in the cornea. The experience of French surgeons at that time showed that it was perfectly safe to excise an eye in which gaseous panophthalmitis was present, though I am bound to admit, that in my first case I performed an evisceration.

Yours faithfully,

R. R. James.


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Last month we announced with profound regret the sudden death of Richard A. Reeve, of Toronto. He was a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and held the degree of B.A. and LL.D. of Toronto and M.D. of Queen’s. In 1872 he joined the Toronto General Hospital, where he practised ophthalmology, otology, rhinology, and laryngology, and even taught chemistry when occasion offered. He also held the post of professor of ophthalmology in the Toronto School of Medicine and later became professor of ophthalmology and otology when amalgamation took place between the University and the School of Medicine. For nearly
twenty years he was dean of the Faculty in the University, and much of his life and interest centered about that institution. Whilst he was dean the new medical buildings and the laboratories were erected, but his most notable achievement was perhaps the beautiful and well-designed Convocation Hall, for the building of which he was lavish in his expenditure of time and energy in collecting the necessary funds. The writer will not readily forget a long autumn afternoon spent with Reeve in wandering about the University for which he had done so much. His enthusiasm was unbounded, and he seemed to know every nook and cranny of the building, to say nothing of their history. Reeve wrote but little on ophthalmology, but he was a member of many societies devoted to that subject. He was a fluent and tactful speaker. He belonged to the American Ophthalmological Society, and in this country had been a vice-president of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom (1907-1910) and was an original member of the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress, at the meetings of which he was a frequent attendant. A man of the highest character Reeve was the incarnation of the spirit of tolerance. Although a total abstainer and a hater of the fumes of tobacco, he participated to the full in the social gatherings of any scientific society to which he belonged, and added no small quota to the general harmony by his aptitude for making a happy and felicitous speech. In 1906 he was President of the British Medical Association when that body met in Toronto. His domestic life was one long ideal, unhappily interrupted by the death of Mrs. Reeve some two years ago. He left no children. At the time of his death he was Emeritus Professor of Ophthalmology in the University of Toronto, and Past President of the British Medical Association. The esteem in which he was generally held may be gathered from the extract given below from the University Monthly, January, 1915, written at a time when he had withdrawn to the ranks of the professores emeriti of Toronto University: “and now this selfless man and stainless gentleman, this professional father and brother to every member of the faculty, our family guide, philosopher, and friend, our paragon and beau idéal of many years, carries with him into the comparative retirement of private practice our hopes, our prayers, our undying gratitude, our unstinted praises, our unfailing reverence and love. We have honoured him with the honour due unto him for the uses we have had of him, for his intrinsic worth, and because the Lord hath made him—His noblest work—an honest man.”

The death of Lieut.-Col. William Watson, C.M.G., F.R.S., should not be allowed to pass unnoticed in our columns. Col. Watson was one of the Professors of Physics at the Imperial College
of Science, South Kensington, and it was here that he came in contact with Sir William Abney and assisted him in his work on colour vision. They published several papers of great interest and importance on this subject in the Proceedings of the Royal Society, and were engaged in further researches at the outbreak of war. Professor Watson was one of the secretaries of the Departmental Committee of the Board of Trade on sight tests for the Mercantile Marine, and the Board of Trade lantern now in use was designed almost entirely by him. This is not the place to do more than mention Professor Watson's work on the theory of the internal combustion engine, etc., nor his military work—the latter being of a nature to give full scope to his scientific knowledge and originality and making demands upon his courage and endurance which were met literally to the death.

NOTES

C. B. Goulden, late of Oldham, has been appointed assistant surgeon to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital. W. H. Brazil has been appointed ophthalmic surgeon to the Stratford-upon-Avon General Hospital. C. Killick, late of Maidstone, has been appointed surgeon to the Bradford Royal Eye and Ear Hospital. Alfred E. A. Loosely has been appointed assistant surgeon in the ophthalmic out-patient department at the London Temperance Hospital.

THE next meeting of the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress will be held on Thursday, July 10, and Friday, July 11, 1919. The first day will be largely taken up by a discussion on "Preventive Ophthalmology," to be opened by Colonel J. Herbert Parsons. The Annual General Meeting will take place on the evening of Thursday at Keble College, Oxford.