OBITUARY

LEWIS CHARLES THOMSON

Not since the sudden and premature death of R. J. Lythgoe has an event so tragic befallen the progress of research on the physiology of vision as the equally sudden and premature death of Dr. L. C. Thomson at the age of 42, on October 10, 1955, after a short illness. A student of Guy's Hospital, he qualified in medicine in 1937 after an unusually brilliant academic career, and subsequently worked in the departments of anatomy and physiology of that school. Here he was attracted towards the study of the physiology of vision, a subject whereon he worked first with W. D. Wright at the Imperial College, and after 1947 for the Medical Research Council at the Institute of Ophthalmology, London, initially with Hartridge and after 1951 until his death as Director of the Group for Research in the Physiology of Vision.

In the relatively short period permitted him to engage in research, Thomson's output of substantial work was enormous. His more important contributions to the subjective study of vision concerned the colour sensitivity and intensity discrimination of the central fovea, the factors influencing the course of dark adaptation, binocular summation within the nervous pathways of the pupillary light reflex, the irregularities in the equal energy luminosity curve, and the variations of hue discrimination with changes in luminance level. The results of these researches were published in some twenty papers which earned him an established position as a world authority on the physiology of vision. His most important work, however, and the endeavour nearest to his heart, was the study of the electrical responses following visual stimulation. A superb experimentalist, and endowed equally with the patience and ingenuity necessary to pursue intricate and delicate techniques whereby he succeeded in picking up the impulses travelling along single fibres of the optic nerve, he showed promise of becoming a worthy successor to Adrian, Hartline, and Granit; when suddenly he was taken away. The potential loss to physiology and ophthalmology is indeed difficult to assess.

Academic honours came his way freely. He was awarded the Ph.D. degree of London University in 1948 and the D.Sc. in 1955. During the present year he was Ettles Memorial Lecturer and he was nominated as the first Edridge Green Lecturer for 1956. He was Chairman of the Colour Group of the Physical Society from 1953 until the time of his death and was a prominent and active member of the Physiological Society.

The scientific world will miss the consistent brilliance of his contributions to his chosen subject; scientific societies both in this country and abroad will miss his shrewd judgement, his enthusiasm, and his good fellowship; but nowhere will his loss be felt so poignantly as at the Institute of Ophthalmology where he was equally respected and beloved as few men have been. Kindly and cheerful on all occasions, honest in his judgement of his own work and that of others, he entered wholeheartedly into every activity of the Institute,
both intellectual and social. Not only did he spend himself for the well-being of those in his own Group for which he was personally responsible, but he turned his energies with understanding and enthusiasm to the individual and collective care of every member of the community. His interests went far beyond work, for he could also play: an expert sailor, an unusually good photographer, and a student of geology, his life was fuller and probably happier than that of most men.

He is survived by a widow and two boys, to whom as well as to his mother, his many friends extend their sympathy.

Cyril Hutchinson Walker

Mr. Cyril H. Walker, M.B., F.R.C.S., died at his home in Bristol at the age of 94. He was born in Yorkshire, studied at Haileybury and Jesus College, Cambridge, carried out his medical studies at the London Hospital, and qualified M.B. in 1887. He became junior and later senior house surgeon at Moorfields; in 1900 he was appointed ophthalmic surgeon to the Bristol General Hospital, and then surgeon to the Bristol Eye Hospital. He was lecturer in ophthalmology to the University of Bristol, Master of the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress (1933 and 1934), President of the Ophthalmological section of the Royal Society of Medicine, and Vice-President of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom (1921 to 1924). He resigned from practice in 1933, occupying his leisure with his garden of which he was very fond.

As one of his students at the General Hospital, and house surgeon and colleague at the Bristol Eye Hospital, I owe a considerable debt to Mr. Walker. He was very helpful to all who had the privilege of working with him, and an excellent teacher who had the gift of being able to impart his knowledge to others. He was unassuming, with a fund of quiet humour; his advice was always very sound, and he was of great assistance in planning and carrying out the rebuilding and reconstruction of the Bristol Eye Hospital, thus helping to maintain the standard of ophthalmology in Bristol, which he and Mr. Richardson Cross had done so much to improve.

A. E. Iles

NOTES

Oxford Ophthalmological Congress

The next meeting will be held on July 2, 3, and 4, 1956. Dr. Jonas S. Friedenwald of Baltimore has accepted the Doyne Lectureship.

Honours

On October 3, 1955, Sir Stewart Duke-Elder received a doctorate honoris causa in the Faculty of Medicine from the University of Ghent, together with the Medal of the University.

Mr. F. W. Law has been elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers for the year 1955-56.

Corrigenda

In the article by Leo E. Lipetz on X-Ray and Radium Phosphenes, British Journal of Ophthalmology (1955), 39, 577:

p. 580, l. 19 from bottom, for mm. read mm.².
1. 12 from bottom, insert bracket after 'intensity', delete bracket after 'phosphenes'.

p. 595, l. 3 from bottom, insert ':' after '620', delete ':' after 'English'.

p. 597, l. 9 from top, insert ':' after '(July)', delete ':' after '(German)'.

l. 17 from top, insert ':' after 206.

l. 8 from bottom, insert '*' before 'Atti'.

p. 598, l. 12 from top, for '.' read '.'.

l. 13 from top, delete initial rule and run on from previous line.