

OBITUARY

LOUIS WERNER, MB, BCh, BAO
(Dublin), DOMS (Eng), Hon FRCSI

Doyen of Irish ophthalmology, and past president of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom and of the Irish Ophthalmological Society, Louis Werner died in Dublin on 6 March 1991 in his 90th year. His grandfather left Alsace when it became part of Germany after the Franco-Prussian war and was commissioned as a portrait painter in Ireland. His father, also Louis Werner, was a gold medallist in philosophy and devoted his career to ophthalmology in Dublin, where, together with Sir Henry Swanzy, a past president of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom, he wrote a standard textbook on diseases of the eye which greatly raised the status of Irish ophthalmology. The son's planned education at Oundle was abandoned when *SS Leinster* was torpedoed, with loss of life of boys returning to school, and continued at St Stephen's Green School, Dublin, where young Louis excelled at rugby, cricket, and tennis on his way to second place in the entrance examination to Trinity College, Dublin. He was awarded the anatomy prize and first class honours and first place in medicine, being placed second with honours in surgery.

After qualification he worked under Sir John Parsons at Moorfields for a year and soon after was appointed surgeon to the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital and four other hospitals in Dublin. He was lecturer in ophthalmology, Dublin University, and examiner at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Queen's University, Belfast, and Dublin University. He was Montgomery lecturer in 1932 at the age of 31, twice president of the Irish Ophthalmological Society, and elected honorary member of several foreign ophthalmological societies. In 1964-8 he was president of council of the European Ophthalmological Society, in 1972 deputy master of the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress, and in 1974-5 president of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom. Among his other achievements were the award of honorary fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and of the College of Ophthalmologists in London. He was a member of the Irish international golf team with a handicap of plus one, and appeared in the final of the Irish amateur championship and the French championship. In later years his chief hobby was racing, and he enjoyed



many successful visits to the national hunt festival meeting at Cheltenham. In great demand as an after dinner speaker both in the British Isles and abroad for his clear enunciation, Irish wit, and Alsatian humour, he brought pleasure to every variety of audience.

Louis was a great teacher and had deep interest in many problems, especially those of glaucoma, and he was one of the first to appreciate the importance of relative pressures within and without capillary walls in the retina and optic nerve. He made many contributions to Irish and British ophthalmology and in his fluent French read papers in Paris and Alsace. He carried a heavy burden of responsibility but continued to work courageously in spite of pain, poor vision, and restricted mobility until almost the end of his life. He married first Mary Boyd Auld, a Scottish lady of great charm and ability who, sadly, died young. In 1950 he married Patricia née MacGillycuddy, widow of Captain George Cordy-Simpson. They had a son Nigel, and his first grandchild Christopher was born four weeks before Louis died. He also had a stepdaughter Janet.

By the Americans Louis will be remembered as one who, with Becher Somerville-Large and Alan Mooney, restored Irish ophthalmology to its rightful place after the war; to the Irish as their father figure who encouraged the young and set the standard for all; and to the British as the epitome of an Irish colleague, as a delightful friend and the most generous of hosts. Louis had that inborn gift, never to be acquired, which brings out the very best in everyone. He was a fine ophthalmic surgeon and a great gentleman.

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BOOK REVIEW

Acute Hemorrhagic Conjunctivitis: Etiology, Epidemiology and Clinical Manifestations. Eds Y Uchida, K Ishii, K Miyamura, S Yamazaki. Pp 438. £133.40. Karger: London. 1989.

About 20 years ago ophthalmic communities witnessed the birth of acute haemorrhagic conjunctivitis (AHC) in Africa. Since then the infection has spread to other continents, affecting hundreds of millions of people.

AHC is an acute and highly contagious infection. It differs from other viral or bacterial conjunctivitis by its short incubation period of about 24 hours, short clinical course of about one week, and its association with severe subconjunctival haemorrhages. The conjunctivitis was first identified on 26 June 1969 in a suburb of Accra, the capital of Ghana. In three months it spread to all parts of Ghana and from there to the west, north, and eastern parts of Africa. In the next two years pandemics of AHC appeared in Asia and the Far East, affecting tens of millions of people. A second pandemic of AHC developed 10 years after the first, affecting Oceania and North, Central, and South America in addition to Africa and Asia. Between the pandemics the AHC remained endemic in overpopulated areas with a hot and humid climate, causing sporadic cases as well as small outbreaks. Several small outbreaks of AHC, mainly in hospitals, have been reported from some European countries.

Virological studies identified enterovirus 70

(EV70) as the cause of AHC. However, later studies showed that in South-east Asia a coxsackievirus A24 variant (CA24V) is responsible for AHC in addition to EV70.

The articles included in this book are by over 50 authors who have been closely involved in studies of AHC in various countries. The articles are grouped under four chapters. The first chapter reviews the historical background and epidemiological features of AHC. The second discusses the major clinical signs and forms of AHC caused by EV70 and CA24V. The laboratory section (chapter 3) presents the development and values of various virus detection tests and serological tests for the diagnosis of AHC. In the last chapter the authors discuss the results of studies using modern molecular technology for identifying the origin of EV70 and CA24V and their continuing evolution in many parts of the world.

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NOTES

Honorary Fellow

Professor Barrie Jones has received the rare distinction of being elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Infectious diseases congress: change of venue

The German Ophthalmological Society will hold an international symposium, 'Update on infectious diseases of the eye,' on 19-21 September 1991, at Münster (not at Bonn/Cologne, as previously arranged). Further details from: Kongress Sekretariat, CCM Cologne Management, Postfach 18 01 80, Schildergasse 101a, D-5000 Köln 1, Germany.

Plastic surgery

The 22nd Annual Scientific Symposium of the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery will be held at Anaheim Marriott, in Anaheim, California, on 12 October 1991. Further details from: John M Harrington, MD, 2811 Lemmon Avenue East, Suite 302, Dallas, TX 75204, USA.

Intraocular inflammation

The 2nd International Symposium on Recent Developments in the Immunopathology of Intraocular Inflammation will take place on 22-25 October 1991 in the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, at the new Maxwell Conference Centre. It will include topics on clinical aspects, experimental models, immunoregulation, accessory molecules, and immunointervention. Further details from: Professor J V Forrester, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Aberdeen, Medical School, Foresterhill, Aberdeen AB9 2DY.