OBITUARY

PROFESSOR HEŘMAN ŠIKL

1888–1955

Professor Heřman Šikl, who died in Prague at the age of 66 on January 16 of this year, was a member of the General Advisory Board of this Journal.

Professor Šikl studied medicine at the Charles IV University, Prague. After graduation, in 1913, he worked under Professor Thomayer and studied pathology under Professor Hlava, the founder of the Czech school of morbid anatomy. In 1921 he was appointed *Privatdozent* and in 1928 assistant professor. In 1937 he became full professor and director of the Hlava Institute of Pathology at the Charles University. In this post he remained until his death. In the course of his tenure of this post, Professor Šikl built up the Czechoslovak Bioptic Centre for the diagnosis of tumours, which covers the whole of Czechoslovakia. Now, over 20,000 specimens from all parts of the country are being examined and reported upon in this centre yearly.

Professor Šikl regarded pathology as the basis of clinical medicine: throughout his career he maintained the closest touch with his clinical colleagues; the full facilities of his department were always at their service and all his researches were aimed at throwing light upon problems of clinical medicine. Very early in his career he described the nature of the exanthem of typhus and later was even able to identify rickettsiae in the skin rash. He was one of the first to demonstrate the presence of protein crystals in the kidney in diffuse plasmocytosis; he did much work on cardiac disorders and believed that he had proof of the allergic nature of certain types of myocarditis. Professor Šikl's technique of dissection of the heart by transverse sections is largely applied, particularly on the Continent, in the study

of cardiac malformations. He was one of the first to draw attention to, and to study, the carcinoma of the lung prevalent in the workers in the uranium mines of Jáchymov.

Professor Šikl was a lucid, stimulating, and enthusiastic teacher; he regarded his lectures as constituting the most important aspect of his professional duties, many and arduous though they were. Throughout a protracted period of ill health, and almost up to the end of his life, he remained assiduous in his role as a teacher. Both as teacher and director of studies, he inspired the regard and affection of all who worked under or with him; as examiner he inspired esteem and confidence. He was a fluent linguist, equally at home in his own language, English, and German. His contributions to scientific periodicals, numbering over 100, were made in all these languages with equal ease and grace. He was an entertaining and witty conversationalist in all these languages. In his younger days he had been a skilled mountaineer, skier, and canoeist; throughout his life he retained a keen interest in literature and music. To the end he remained truly young in spirit. To those who knew him, his departure renders the world a duller place.

Professor Šikl was a member of many scientific societies, among others of the (British) Association of Clinical Pathologists, to which he was elected as corresponding member in 1948.

Professor Šikl married, in 1925, Milada Matejovská, of Prague, who survives him. There were no children of the marriage.

S. C. D.

BOOK REVIEWS

Ciba Foundation Symposium on Leukaemia Research.

Edited by G. E. W. Wolstenholme and Margaret P. Cameron, assisted by Joan Etherington. (Pp. xiv + 297; 56 figures, 30s.) London: J. & A. Churchill. 1954.

The principal papers in this book are not very different, except perhaps in their uniformly high quality, from those read at any pathological congress. The stimulating quality of the book, and it is very great, lies in the verbatim reports of the subsequent discussions. Leading

workers on leukaemia, brought together *in colloquio* by the Ciba Foundation, freely expressed their minds not only on established knowledge and the facts newly presented to them, but also on what seemed to them the most likely course of future advance. The reader ends confirmed in his ignorance of the fundamental nature of leukaemia, impressed by the pace of recent advance in its chemotherapy, but above all refreshed by intercourse with minds that see further and wider than most of us can.

MARTIN HYNES.