

Obituary.

PROF. F. R. JAPP, F.R.S.

FRANCIS ROBERT JAPP was born in Dundee on February 8, 1848, his father being the minister of the Catholic Apostolic Church in that city. His early academic training gave little indication of his ultimate career, for after graduating in arts at the University of St. Andrews he entered the University of Edinburgh as a student of law in 1868. Ill-health, unfortunately, soon led to an interruption of these studies and to a fairly long period of foreign travel and residence, mostly in Germany, and it was not until the autumn of 1873 that Japp definitely settled down to the study of chemistry in Bunsen's laboratory at Heidelberg. He completed his curriculum at that university by graduating as doctor of philosophy in 1876, and afterwards proceeded to Bonn, whither the fame of Kekulé attracted chemical pilgrims from all parts of Europe. In his Kekulé Memorial Lecture, delivered before the Chemical Society in 1898, Japp paid eloquent tribute to the inspiring genius of this great chemist. While in the Bonn laboratory, Japp worked more especially under Schultz and Anschütz, and papers were published jointly with each of these investigators.

In 1878 Japp returned to Great Britain, and after working for a short time in Crum Brown's laboratory in Edinburgh he became research assistant at the Normal School of Science, South Kensington, under the late Sir Edward Frankland. At the reorganisation of the Science Schools in 1881 he was made assistant professor in the department of chemistry, and this post he continued to hold until his appointment in 1890 to the chair of chemistry in the University of Aberdeen, as the successor of Thomas Carnelley. During his tenure of the London post, Japp devoted himself with great industry and enthusiasm to the prosecution of research in organic chemistry, and in the decade 1880-1890 he published, either in his own name or conjointly with his pupils, about forty papers dealing largely with phenanthraquinone and other diketones and their derivatives. This activity in research was recognised by election into the Royal Society in 1885, and by the award of the Longstaff medal of the Chemical Society in 1891. For six years, moreover, he acted as foreign secretary of the Chemical Society, of which body he was later a vice-president for two periods.

At the time of Japp's arrival in Aberdeen the reconstruction and extension of the chemistry department were overdue, but for several years the work had to be carried on in the old, ill-ventilated, badly lighted laboratories. In spite of this, Japp, who was pre-eminently an investigator, contrived to prosecute and encourage research work, and it was perhaps his chief service to the northern university that he fostered the spirit of original investigation and inquiry in a none too favourable environment. During his tenure of the Aberdeen chair, covering the period 1890-1914, about forty memoirs emanated from the chemical laboratories there.

The character of this, as well as the earlier research, was such as to attract the notice mainly of specialists; but Japp's address on "Stereochemistry and Vitalism," delivered in 1898 in the capacity of president of the

Chemistry Section of the British Association, made a much wider appeal, and gave rise to an animated discussion in the columns of NATURE. The thesis put forward in the address, and defended with much suggestiveness and resource, embodied a development of Pasteur's view that "the production of single asymmetric compounds or their isolation from the mixture of their enantiomorphs is the prerogative of life. Only asymmetry can beget asymmetry."

This sketch would be incomplete without some reference to the very wide scope of Japp's interests. Primarily a chemist, he possessed marked literary, artistic, and linguistic talent, and the British Association address already mentioned furnishes ample evidence of his broad philosophic outlook and of his well-stored mind. An accomplished linguist, he was familiar with much of the best in the literatures of Germany, France, and Italy, as well as of his own country, while on the artistic side he was a musician of knowledge and taste.

After relinquishing the Aberdeen post, Japp lived quietly in retirement in London until his death on August 1 last. Latterly a semi-invalid, he was dependent on the unremitting care and attention of the widow and two daughters who remain to mourn his loss.

J. C. P.

PROF. OTAKAR KUKULA.

THE Charles' (Bohemian) University of Prague lost on August 11, at the relatively early age of fifty-eight years, one of its most eminent professors, namely, Prof. O. Kukula, professor of surgery, director of the first surgical clinic, and at the same time Rector Magnificus of the University. Prof. Kukula's clinic was equipped in the most modern way, and he was in close touch with internal chemical as well as biological methods of investigation, so that his chair was a model of its kind. As a surgeon he was unsurpassed, being able to carry out surgical operations of the most difficult and delicate kind with the greatest ease and calm. He not only studied all known good methods of operation, but also introduced many new and the most difficult ones, and he was well known for this in scientific circles abroad as well as at home.

Prof. Kukula published in Bohemian, French and German more than forty scientific papers, of which only those on stones in the bladder and on the surgery of the kidneys need be mentioned. His great work, "Pathology and Therapy of the Inflammation of the Appendix," is a remarkable monograph, finding its equal only in the work of Kelly.

Prof. Kukula was a member of the Bohemian Academy and of many foreign scientific societies, and he was also the founder and president of the Czechoslovak Automobile Club. He rendered great services to the Serbs in the war with Turkey and was decorated with the highest Serbian orders.

BOHUSLAV BRAUNER.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. E. H. Barton, professor of physics, University College, Nottingham, on September 23, at sixty-six years of age.

Don Luis Cubillo y Muro, director of the Geographic Institute of Spain and president of the Spanish National Committees of Geophysics and of Astronomy, on July 10.