In memoriam Professor A. Franceschetti (1896–1968)

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Professor Franceschetti was unfortunately taken from us in the night of March 8, 1968. A few words in memory of a great master and a great man may find their place here. Prof. Franceschetti had barely retired from active life in the Ophthalmological Clinic of Geneva, after 33 years of ever increasing work; yet this was by no means the end of his career. After retiring he created for himself a new style of life entirely devoted to the service of man. He continued to care for the sick, he pursued his research work and responded to numerous invitations to speak to scientific meetings. Prof. Franceschetti was born in Zürich, Switzerland, on October 11, 1896. He was a student of Prof. Vogt in Zürich and then of Prof. Brückner in Basle. He became interested very early in neuro-ophthalmological and neuro-genetic problems. His work on the pupilla in collaboration with Prof. Bing (Basle), on traumatic encephalopathy, on ocular muscle paralysis, on the genetics of eye diseases and of cranio-facial dysostoses placed him among world known personalities in these fields. In 1933 he succeeded Prof. Gourfein as head of the ophthalmological Clinic in Geneva where his dynamic character found an adequate ground for full development. He left some 500 publications covering the fields of ophthalmology and also touching upon other medical specialities such as neurology, pediatrics, dermatology and genetics. He had a special inclination for genetics where he could apply his mathematical gifts. Thanks to his exceptional personality and authority, thanks also to his constant perseverance, he could see the realization of a wish very dear to him, namely the establishment of an institute for medical genetics at the University of Geneva, followed some years later by the creation of a chair for this new branch of medicine.

Whoever knew Prof. Franceschetti was immediately struck by the scope of his brilliant mind, his generous humour and his gift for settling delicate matters. Wherever Prof. Franceschetti appeared, he was at once the center of all attention, a center from which charm and intellect irradiated, keeping spell-bound his environment. Now, he is no longer with us; but his friends, collaborators and patients all over the world regret him and will keep a luminous memory of him. His death leaves a wife, a son, a daughter and five grand-children whom he had always loved dearly and who brought much gaiety into his scientific life.