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NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

Albrecht von Graefe (1828–70)

Von Graefe, who was of gigantic importance in ophthalmology, died at the early age of 42. By the age of 39 Von Graefe was internationally a unique figure and presided and dominated over the entire 3rd International Congress of Ophthalmology held in Paris in 1867. He read four papers including a classic description of choroid tubercles, but his most notable contribution was his exposition of his “modified linear extraction” as a new technique for the operation of cataract.

His contributions to ophthalmology were multiple. His name is eponymously remembered in the von Graefe sign in exophthalmic goitre and the von Graefe extraction knife. Ophthalmology developed through the application of the ophthalmoscope by von Graefe. His clinical contributions included the physiology of the oblique extraocular muscles and the symptoms of ocular paralysis, silver nitrate treatment of conjunctivitis, description of the various types of hemianopia, the efficacy of iridectomy in acute glaucoma, occlusion of the central retinal artery by emboli, the recognition of papilloedema, and the recognition of optic neuritis rather than paralysis of the optic nerve as being a cause of central visual failure.

Von Graefe died from tuberculosis. In 1882 his statue (with the ophthalmoscope) was erected in the garden of Charite Hospital in Berlin, and later relocated to Shuman Avenue.

Along with Donders, von Graefe founded the *Archiv für Ophthalmologie*, which did so much to raise the status of this specialty. Donders and Arlt became the editors. A stamp was issued by West Germany (West Berlin) in 1978 on the 150th year of the birth of von Graefe. (Stanley Gibbons B553, Scott 9N417).

L F HAAS