Dr. G. CARMICHAEL LOW, President of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, writes:

The death of Sir Ronald Ross removes another of the great pioneers of tropical medicine, and one not easily to be replaced. His name, however, will live for all time as the discoverer of the transmission of malaria by the mosquito, and the results rendered possible by this discovery are a gift to posterity. As all know, Ross joined the Indian Medical Service in 1881, and was appointed to its Madras branch in the same year. For the first years of his service he did little of note, but after Laveran's discovery of the malarial parasite his interest in that subject was aroused, an interest which was strengthened after the meeting with Manson in 1894, which led to such great results. On his return to India in 1895 Ross tackled the subject in earnest and with such energy and resolution that eventually he solved the problem, thus adding another illustrious achievement to British medicine.

When one looks back upon this epoch-making work, the thing that impresses itself most upon one is that it was done under the greatest difficulties and often against definite official opposition. There was also no one at hand to help, and he had to rely entirely for any encouragement on Manson, who was many thousands of miles away. Yet in face of all these obstacles he triumphed, and, moreover, worked out in such accurate detail the life history of the malaria parasite in the mosquito that practically nothing has been added to our knowledge of this since. This is one of the most wonderful points in Ross's work. There is no question that Ross was a genius. No one but a genius could, without any practical laboratory training, have accomplished such a piece of work. A wonderful versatility is also shown by his contributions to mathematics, literature, and philosophy.

Ross's life in England after leaving India was an arduous one. Disappointed in some ways that more practical application of his discovery had not been made, he strove his utmost to bring this to the notice of the medical world at large, not only in his first days at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, but right up to the end of his life at the Ross Institute at Putney, founded to perpetuate his name. Ross was the second President of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, following Manson in that position. While holding this post he advanced tropical medicine in many ways, and he never lost his interest in the society. In 1929 he was awarded the Manson medal, and a few months ago, when Manson House became the home of the society, he came there to be photographed with the council of which he was an honoured member.

Of an ardent temperament, it was difficult for him to cope with inanition and incompetence; and his desire to overcome these sometimes made him appear pugnacious. His energy and enthusiasm for his work were boundless, and he never spared himself in carrying out his schemes for the prevention and stamping out of malaria. For this purpose he visited many parts of the world, such as the West Coast of Africa, Ismailia, and Mauritius. His memoirs, written by himself, give some idea of what he accomplished. He was also appreciative of the work of others, and was always pleased to help young men beginning their careers.

Many honours came to Ross, including the Nobel Prize in 1902. He was especially gratified by the foundation of the institute at Putney which bears his name; and also by the testimony of appreciation the nation made to him in his closing years. The world will never forget him: the names of Manson and Ross will go down to posterity together with those of Pasteur, Lister, and other benefactors of our race. The British nation should indeed be proud of the part its sons have borne in the elucidation of the problems of tropical medicine.

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SIR CHARTERS SYMONDS, K.B.E., C.B.,

M.D., M.S., F.R.C.S.

Consulting Surgeon to Guy's Hospital

Sir Charters James Symonds, who died on September 14th at Harrow, was born at Dalhousie on July 24th, 1852, and belonged to one of the distinguished families of the Province of New Brunswick. The ancestor of the family in America sailed from London in the seventeenth century and settled at Woburn, Massachusetts. In 1763 James Simonds migrated to Acadia, receiving a grant of land at the mouth of the River St. John. One of his sons, the grandfather of Sir Charters, was a member of the Legislative Council in 1828, Speaker of the House of Assembly, and Provincial Treasurer.

Having decided to study medicine, Charters Symonds came to London in 1870 and entered Guy's Hospital. His career as a student was remarkably successful. In 1875 he won the gold medal for surgery and obtained the M.R.C.S. In 1876 he was appointed junior demonstrator, and in 1877 was promoted to senior demonstrator of anatomy in the Medical School. In 1877, in his examinations for the M.B. degree at the University of London, he obtained first-class honours in medicine, forensic medicine, and obstetrics, with a gold medal in each of the two latter subjects. He also obtained the B.S., with first-class honours and gold medal. In 1878 he proceeded M.D., and shortly afterwards became surgical registrar at Guy's. He obtained the M.S. degree and the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1881. In the following year he was elected assistant surgeon to Guy's, and in 1902 was promoted full surgeon and lecturer on surgery in the Medical School. In 1912, on reaching the age limit, he was appointed consulting surgeon. From 1907 to 1923 he was a member of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons, and vice-president in 1916, in which year he gave the Bradshaw Lecture; in 1921 he was Hunterian Orator. He had been president of the Medical Society of London, of the Hunterian Society, and of the Clinical Section of the Royal Society of Medicine. For some years he was surgeon to the Evelina Hospital for Children and consulting surgeon to a number of charitable institutions in and near London. At the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association in Birmingham in 1890 he was vice-president of the subsection of Laryngology and Rhinology; and at the Oxford meeting in 1904 he was president of the corresponding section.

He had served six years as surgeon of the King's Colonial Yeomanry, afterwards King Edward's Horse, and in 1908, on the creation of the Territorial Force, he became a major on the staff of the Second London General Hospital. When war broke out in August, 1914, he was called up, and at once assumed active duties, with charge of wards. In 1915 he was appointed consulting surgeon to the Eastern Command, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and shortly afterwards was sent out as consulting surgeon to the Forces in the Mediterranean, with the rank of colonel. He had a busy time at the hospital base in Malta with the wounded from the Suvla Bay landing. In April, 1916, he was transferred to Salonika, and assisted in setting up the equipment for

thirty thousand wounded and supervising surgical work. In the following July he was sent home invalided, mentioned in dispatches, and received the C.B. (military), but shortly afterwards was posted to the Southern Command, and, as consulting surgeon at Netley, supervised the surgical work from Portsmouth. On July 1st, 1919, after nearly five years of war service, he was created K.B.E. in the military division.

Retirement from active practice gave Sir Charters Symonds leisure for much service in good causes. He became treasurer of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, chairman of the Invalid Children's Aid Association, and chairman of the Children's Hospital at Hampstead. He was also for some years a member of the Advisory Committee to the Home Secretary on vivisection licences. In 1929 the University of New Brunswick conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Sir D'ARCY POWER, chairman of the Committee of Management of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, writes:

Philanthropy was a marked feature in the mental makeup of Sir Charters Symonds. It was partly ingrained, partly perhaps the result of experience. The *res angusta domi* of his early life and the necessity of self-support by coaching at the beginning of his professional career taught him the value of money, with what difficulty it was earned, and how easily it was spent. He had always, therefore, a great sympathy with those who had failed in medicine and had either become destitute themselves or had left dependants with insufficient means of support. The work of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund appealed especially to him, first as a member of the Case Committee and more recently as treasurer. What he did, he did without counting the cost to himself. So long as he was well enough he came to the office almost daily, and spent, not minutes, but hours, in considering the applications and making himself master of the facts connected with individual applicants. At committee meetings he was thus able to give valuable advice about the amounts of the grants to be made. As treasurer he was equally successful, and it was a matter of supreme satisfaction to him when it was stated in the ninety-sixth annual report, issued on March 15th of this year, that "the income for the year is the largest since the foundation of the Fund." It had increased from £8,000 in 1921 to £17,700 in 1931, and, what to him was equally satisfactory, 675 grants had been made and 199 annuitants had been comforted in place of a meagre 241 and 178 respectively. It was a cause of grief that illness prevented his attendance at the conference on the medical charities during the Centenary Meeting of the British Medical Association last July in London.

As a surgeon Charters Symonds was one of the fast-diminishing body who saw, and had taken an active part in, the surgical revolution. Brought up in the old school, he watched the growth of Listerian practice as it was enunciated at Guy's Hospital by Sir Henry Howse. He observed the early mistakes and avoided them. He passed cautiously through the period of joint excisions and emerged a conservative surgeon. His alert mind saw the advantages of Listerian surgery, and he soon became a leading exponent of abdominal surgery as practised by a general surgeon in a large teaching hospital. He was brilliant as a teacher of students. Lacking the sarcasm of his remarkable colleague Mr. W. H. A. Jacobson, he drove knowledge into his pupils by impressing upon them the need for a sound basis of pathology and the habit of accurate observation. He instilled into them, too, the tact and kindliness of manner of which he was himself a master. This knowledge and these habits became of supreme value during the great war. The experience gained when he was a dresser and many wounds suppurated enabled him to treat successfully a type of wound with which his younger colleagues were unfamiliar. His conservatism taught him not to advise operation too hurriedly; his tact and geniality enabled him to work harmoniously with others and at the same time to promote harmony amongst jarring elements. If his character had to be summed up in a single word it would be expressed by Humanity.

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T. H. C. STEVENSON, C.B.E., M.D.

Late Superintendent of Statistics, General Register Office

Thomas Henry Craig Stevenson, son of James Stevenson of Strabane, co. Tyrone, was born in 1870 and was educated at University College, London. He qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., and graduated M.B.Lond. in 1896, and proceeded M.D. (State Medicine) in 1902. He entered the Public Health Service as an assistant school medical officer of the London County Council in 1905; in 1908 he became school medical officer to the Somersetshire County Council. A year later he was chosen to succeed Dr. John Tatham as Superintendent of Statistics in the General Register Office. His appointment coincided with that of a new Registrar-General, and the four pre-war years of his service formed a most fruitful epoch in the history of English official vital statistics. During the war many demands were made upon his energies, and it may be that those strenuous days undermined his constitution. He was, however, able to work hard and successfully for several years longer, but some little time before his retirement it was evident that he was feeling the strain. More than a year ago it became clear that rest from official duties was imperative, and he retired from office in August, 1931. It was too late; his health continued to fail, and he died on September 12th, 1932.

Stevenson was the fourth holder of an office created for William Farr. Farr's immediate successor, Ogle, will be remembered rather as an accomplished Greek scholar than as a statistician. The combination of quaintness and genius which made any volume of the long series of annual reports for which Farr was responsible entertaining as well as instructive, was no longer to be detected. Tatham was more interested in statistics than Ogle, and introduced various improvements, especially, perhaps, in the tabulation of mortality from cancer, but the annual reports of his time continued to be rather dull. Stevenson changed all that. Superficially nobody could have been less like Farr. Farr, although not a Welshman (he was of Shropshire stock), had much of the intellectual restlessness and excitability which are popularly attributed to the Celtic temperament. Stevenson was an Ulsterman, slow of speech, cautious in statement, and, far from being prone to overrate the numerical method, was habitually inclined to underrate his own technical knowledge. Fundamentally, however, the two men were much alike. Both were consumed by a desire to make medical statistics an instrument for the relief of human suffering. In his official writings Stevenson put a restraint upon himself which Farr never knew, but very little study of the reports and a quite superficial acquaintance with the man himself would be enough to convince any intelligent person that Stevenson was as alive to the preventive medical aspect of his work as Farr himself. Indeed, in his later years—in writing, for example, on the mortality of illegitimate infants in the first minutes of life—the righteous anger of a tender-minded man breaks through the restraints of an official style as effectively as in the days of Farr. Again, year after