

Obituary

SIR JAMES PURVES-STEWART, K.C.M.G., C.B.,
M.D., F.R.C.P.

Sir James Purves-Stewart, the well-known neurologist, died at his home in London on June 14 at the age of 79. The son of Mr. John Stewart, J.P., of Edinburgh, he was educated at the Royal High School of the city. He won many medals and prizes as a medical student at Edinburgh University, and graduated M.B., C.M., with first-class honours, in 1894. After holding resident posts in the Royal Infirmary his unusual ability led to his appointment as assistant, first to the professor of physiology and later to the professor of medicine. Stewart, as he was then, began at this early



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date to publish papers on various subjects, including one on the superficial anatomy of the nerves. A happily successful guess in 1895 about the location of a cerebellar tumour encouraged him, so he recounted in the preface to one of his books, to launch into the great stream of neurology. After proceeding M.D. in 1897 he left Edinburgh for London, where he was for two years a resident house-physician at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases. At Edinburgh he had acquired a sound knowledge of physio-

logy and medicine. At Queen Square he began to build on this foundation a specialized experience of neurology.

As physician to the Imperial Yeomanry Field Hospital, Stewart was mentioned in dispatches for his services in the South African campaign of 1900-1. When this war was over he visited the medical schools at Jena and Frankfurt. Returning to London, he was appointed honorary assistant physician to the Westminster Hospital. There he resumed teaching, first in pharmacology and therapeutics, later as lecturer on his chosen specialty of diseases of the nervous system. Soon afterwards he became known beyond the bounds of the Westminster Hospital with the publication in 1906 of his book *The Diagnosis of Nervous Diseases*. In the preface to the first edition he wrote: "It is seldom in medicine that we meet with diseases in their typical forms, at least as described in textbooks. More often we have to deal with patients who exhibit signs and symptoms common to several diseases. The present volume approaches the subject of diagnosis of nervous diseases from the clinical standpoint. . . ." This book was made up chiefly of lectures given to students and graduates, with reprints of articles in various journals and many illustrations. It broke new ground and was so well received that a second edition was called for in 1909 and a third by 1911. Each edition was freshened with new material and illustrations. French, German, Spanish, and even Arabic translations were called for. During the recent war, while in the U.S.A., he persuaded the well-known Boston neurologist, Dr. H. R. Viets, to help him in revising the book. Together they worked on it throughout each day for three weeks. The result of this thorough revision was sent to England by ship and through an accident of war was unfortunately lost for ever in the Atlantic Ocean.

During the 1914-18 war Stewart served in Malta, Gallipoli, Salonika, and Egypt. He was consulting physician to the Forces in the Mediterranean and Near East theatres. He was three times mentioned in dispatches, and was awarded the C.B. in 1916 and created K.C.M.G. in 1918. In 1927 he published a work on *Intracranial Tumours*, in which he recorded his experience of 253 cases, of which 121 came to necropsy. He confined his notes entirely to his own observations, and gave no reference to the work of other clinicians. This particular book was later translated into Russian. Sir James Purves-Stewart was also responsible for the neurological volume in the "Oxford Medicine" series, and for twenty-six years he wrote the section on nervous diseases for the *Medical Annual*. Apart from his work at the Westminster Hospital he was honorary physician to the West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases, the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, the Central London Throat and Ear Hospital, and the King Edward VII Convalescent Home for Officers at Osborne.

In 1930 Purves-Stewart was intimately concerned with the report of the discovery by Miss Kathleen Chevassut of a virus in the cerebrospinal fluid of cases of disseminated sclerosis. Purves-Stewart gave his own account of the investigations, which had been going on for two years in the Westminster Hospital laboratories. He claimed that the "virus," *Spherula insularis*, was found in 176 of 189 cases of disseminated sclerosis. He also stated that he had treated patients with a vaccine and that improvement had taken place in 40 out of 70 of these cases. He pointed out, however, the fact that patients with this disease often had spontaneous remission. Later he published another paper, in collaboration with Braxton Hicks and Hocking, describing inoculation experiments on animals. These studies created much interest but were sharply criticized. So important would the discovery have been, if confirmed, that offers were made by the Medical Research Council and the Halley Stewart Trust to defray the cost of repetition of the work in other laboratories. In February, 1931, Purves-Stewart dissociated himself from Miss Chevassut, because of her refusal in December, 1930, to repeat the original observations for the Medical Research Council. She did accept, however, premises and facilities offered by the Halley Stewart Trust, and 162 cases were treated there. The results in 69 of these cases were reviewed by Dr. F. M. R. Walshe, who concluded that patients so treated were worse off than if they had been left alone. By September, 1931, Miss Chevassut claimed that the specific organism could readily be maintained in subcultures on solid media. The Trustees, reasonably enough, wished to examine these cultures, but none were forthcoming. Finally in March, 1932, the Trustees had no alternative but to abandon the trial and close the small institute they had made available for this work. Subsequently Dr. B. Halley Stewart (*B.M.J.*, 1932, 2, 326) described how the organisms originally said to be present in 93% of cases of disseminated sclerosis were detected by their discoverer less and less often. Subcultures of the "specific organism" were also identified as pure cultures of the virus of bovine pleuropneumonia. Describing his uncongenial task, Dr. Halley Stewart mentioned that in her original paper on the subject Miss Chevassut had described her virus as bearing a striking resemblance to that of bovine pleuropneumonia.

Sir James Purves-Stewart was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1906 and acted as examiner in medicine in 1904-8 and 1922-6. At annual meetings of the B.M.A. he served as secretary in 1912, vice-president in 1922, and president in 1931 of the Section of Neurology. He was a member of several American and Continental Societies and the recipient of many scientific

honours. He was always proud of his honorary rank of colonel, and at the age of 72 he contrived to serve in the Home Guard in the recent war, writing at that time his book *Over Military Age*. He made his home for many years of his retirement at the Belle Tote lighthouse on Beachy Head. Only last year he generously offered to present the lighthouse to the Eastbourne Corporation.

Purves-Stewart was very much of an individualist, and not free from the weaknesses common to lesser and greater men than himself. Among those who followed the same specialty in this country he occupied rather an isolated position. His enduring monument is his well-known and much used textbook, unique in neurological literature and of high value to those trying to master the most difficult of all medical arts, the diagnosis of diseases of the nervous system.

C. C. EASTERBROOK, M.D., F.R.C.P.Ed.

Dr. C. C. Easterbrook, who died in Edinburgh on June 5 at the age of 82, was for many years physician-superintendent of the Crichton Royal Institution, Dumfries.

Charles Cromhall Easterbrook was educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh, and at Edinburgh University, where he graduated M.A. in 1887 and M.B., Ch.B. with first-class honours in 1892. He was a house-surgeon at the Royal Maternity Hospital and at the Royal Infirmary, house-physician at the Royal Infirmary and at the City Fever Hospital. He started his psychiatric career in 1894 under the late Sir Thomas Clouston, and for more than seven years he was on the staff of the Royal Edinburgh Mental Hospital at Morningside. He proceeded M.D. with honours in 1900 and became a member of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in the same year. He was elected a Fellow in 1903, a year after he had been appointed medical superintendent of the Ayr District Asylum. At Ayr he was responsible for considerable extensions to the hospital, and these included a new reception hospital and infirmary which he designed.

Dr. Easterbrook was appointed physician-superintendent of the Crichton Royal, Dumfries, in 1908, and held this appointment for 29 years until his retirement in 1937. Under his leadership the Crichton not only retained its position among the foremost of psychiatric institutions but enhanced its reputation.

The Crichton had grown very considerably under his predecessor Dr. Rutherford, and one of Dr. Easterbrook's earliest tasks was to put before his board of directors a plan for the future development of the institution, aimed at making possible an ideal classification of the patients and, incidentally, nearly doubling the bed accommodation. The last building of the scheme he submitted as far back as 1909 was not completed until 1938. The directors did him the honour of naming this building after him, and Easterbrook Hall will remain a fitting memorial to his life-long devotion to the mental invalid. The operating theatre and x-ray room, departments for hydrotherapy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy, a swimming-pool, gymnasium, concert hall, café, library, and even a hair-dressing saloon all show the foresight of the man who planned all these things so many years ago. He was to a large extent his own architect, and in his buildings he incorporated all that he had found best in the Continental mental hospitals and clinics. Dr. Easterbrook made many contributions to the literature, and in 1925 he delivered the Morison Lectures to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, choosing as his subject "Mental Invalids." After his retirement in 1937, as a labour of love he compiled the *Chronicle of the Crichton Royal*, a comprehensive review of the growth and activities of the hospital throughout the century from its inauguration in 1837.

Dr. Easterbrook married in 1905 Ann Elliot Thomson, daughter of the late William Thomson, of Clovensford, Selkirkshire, and she survives him with a son and daughter.

Professor R. J. A. Berry writes: The death, after a long crippling illness bravely borne to the end, of Dr. C. C. Easterbrook has deprived the mental service of Scotland of one of its great personalities.

His memory will last, I take it, as long and even longer than the Easterbrook Hall at the Crichton Royal Institution. But it is not for his work that I lament his passing. It is rather for those personal qualities which so endeared him to contemporaries who knew him as intimately as I did. On Jan. 19, 1900, there met together at 21, Heriot Row, Edinburgh, and for the first time, seven young Edinburgh medical graduates, who then and there formed themselves into a small literary club which they termed the Heptagon. Meeting at each others' houses during the winter session, it was the duty of the host to provide the mental and physical pabulum for the evening, the whole bonded and cemented together by the best of friendships. Charlie's death confronts the writer with the melancholy fact that of the original seven members he is now the only survivor. But there must surely be some who have memories of Andrew Balfour, J. W. Dowden, C. C. Easterbrook, J. S. Fowler, C. B. Ker, and A. Logan Turner. It was Balfour, the Sir Andrew of a later day but then known to us as "Beefy," who read the first of the Heptagon papers on Graham's *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*. And now Charles Easterbrook, too, has gone.

Dr. ISAAC FLETCHER died at his home in Workington, Cumberland, on May 28, at the age of 85. He was born at Seaton, close to the town of Workington where he practised for sixty years. He graduated M.B., C.M. at Glasgow in 1890, took the D.P.H., and soon settled down to a long life in general practice. He always worked hard, but he crowded many other interests into what little spare time he had. He was essentially a family man, and was very happy to see his five sons carrying on the best traditions of the medical and dental professions, while his daughter formed the last link in a strongly united family circle. As would be expected, his hobbies were directly concerned with the welfare of others: he was an exceptionally keen worker in the St. John Ambulance Brigade, a Rotarian, and a Freemason, and he reached the highest ranks in all these brotherhoods. He was, too, a life-long teetotaler and non-smoker, and never ceased to support the temperance cause. Dr. Isaac Fletcher had little time to spend on games, but he was a keen Rugby Union footballer as a young man, and he ultimately became life president of the Cumberland Rugby League. He was not a big man physically but kept his trim figure all through his life. He was no motorist, and cycled his rounds practically up to the last. His capacity for life in all its aspects was immense—for example, in the first world war he looked after three practices, acted as school medical officer, and sat on recruiting boards. He practised for many years in the days when the G.P. had to deal with everything which came his way; major surgery, obstetric emergencies, and anaesthetics were all part of his daily routine. He was an artist in the use of chloroform, and his records with that anaesthetic will stand comparison surprisingly well with those of its modern counterparts. An outstandingly able example of the old type of doctor giving devoted and excellent service to the community, Dr. Isaac Fletcher was a kindly man, and his colleagues never hesitated to turn to him for help. A wise man, too, his counsel on any problem was worth having, and the dividing line between right and wrong was clear as crystal to him. The crowded church and the hosts of mourners at the graveside showed how great was the affection and respect felt for a man who had long outlived his generation, and yet died in the midst of a community which loved him and which will miss him as no other man in Workington could be missed.—A. G. A.