

DAWSON TURNER, M.D., F.R.C.P.ED.,

Honorary Consulting Physician in Radiology, Royal Infirmary,
Edinburgh.

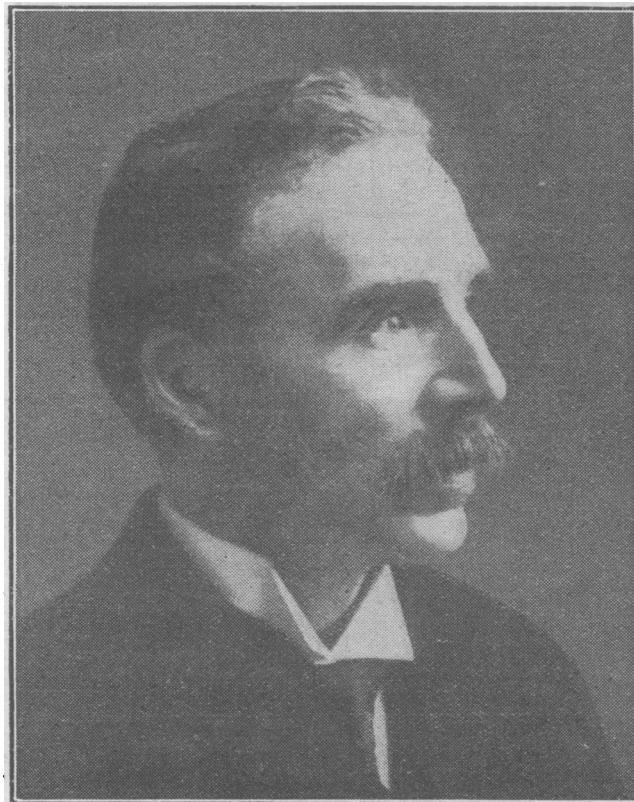
We have to announce with deep regret the death of Dr. Dawson Turner, one of the pioneers in radiology in Edinburgh, which occurred on December 25th, 1928, at Godalming, Surrey, where he had been living since his retirement a few years ago.

Dawson Fyers Duckworth Turner was born at Liverpool in 1857, and after graduating B.A. at Dalhousie University, Canada, went, in 1884, to Edinburgh to study medicine. He graduated M.B., C.M. with honours in 1888, proceeding M.D. in 1890. In the same year he obtained the diploma M.R.C.P.Ed., being admitted to the Fellowship in 1891, and became also M.R.C.P.Lond. During the summer of 1889 he acted as resident physician in the Royal Infirmary with Sir James Affleck, having as fellow residents Dr. R. A. Fleming, Professor Robert Muir, the late Professor James Ritchie, and Mr. Alexander Miles, and was later house-physician in the Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital. After a period spent in visiting foreign schools of medicine, he turned his attention to lecturing on physics in Surgeons' Hall, Edinburgh, being also clinical tutor in the extramural class of clinical medicine. Shortly after he had begun to lecture upon physics the x rays were discovered by Roentgen in 1895, and Dawson Turner was one of the first to recognize their possibilities in medicine. A primitive x -ray installation, which was the first in Edinburgh, was set up in his house at George Square, and attracted much attention when he demonstrated to his friends and colleagues its properties of showing up bones and foreign bodies in the tissues. When, a few years later, radium was discovered, he soon secured a specimen, to which he added from time to time. For many years this was the only supply of radium in Edinburgh, and Dr. Turner generously placed it at the disposal of the Royal Infirmary for the treatment of patients until the managers secured supplies for the institution. It was natural that when an x -ray department was installed in the Infirmary it should be placed under his charge, and although his health determined him a few years later to abandon the management of the radiological department, he retained his connexion with it as honorary consulting physician in radiology to the Infirmary, and for many years continued in charge of the treatment by means of radium. In common with many of the early workers in radio-therapeutics, Dr. Turner suffered considerable deterioration in general health from the ill effect of long exposure to the rays, which was in the early days of radiology little understood. He lost successively three fingers and an eye from this cause, and the effect of these losses on his general health led to a considerable curtailment of his activities.

In addition to his lectureship in physics, Dr. Turner acted as examiner in physics in the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and additional examiner in physics in Edinburgh University, and he was for a time vice-president of the Roentgen Society. His *Manual of*

Practical Medical Electricity was a well-known textbook on this subject for many years, and went into a fourth edition, while his smaller work *Radium, its Physics and Therapeutics* was also widely used. He contributed many papers, mostly on physical subjects related to medicine, to various medical journals, such as an article on "The haemorenal salt index and deficiency of the kidney," published in the *Transactions of the British Association* in 1906, and an article on "Electrolysis in medicine and surgery" contributed to the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* in 1908. In that year, at the Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association at Sheffield, he was vice-president of the Electrical Section.

Apart from the affairs of his profession, Dr. Turner had many interests. He was an accomplished linguist, had travelled much, and possessed wide general culture. He was one of the earliest men in the medical profession to take up motoring in the closing years of last century, and enthusiastically recommended this means of progression as a method of applying open-air treatment in cases of phthisis. Although, for reasons of health, he had retired from medical work in Edinburgh and had sought a home in the South of England, he maintained communication with many friends in Edinburgh, by whom, as well as by the public bodies with which he was connected, his loss will be keenly felt. He is survived by a widow.



DR. DAWSON TURNER.

Dr. JOHN W. L. SPENCE, radiologist, Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Sick Children and Deaconess Hospital, writes:

Nearly thirty years have passed since I was asked by Dawson Turner to assist him in the newly organized X-Ray Department of the Edinburgh Infirmary. It then consisted of two rooms, well below the street level, and with a precipitous wooden stairway leading to it. From the very start Turner displayed the keen interest and masterly powers of arrangement which characterized all he did. He did much for radiology and later in the domain of radium. He was gifted with excellent observation and forethought. To his pioneer labours and wide outlook are largely due the present well-equipped radiological department of our Infirmary. Possessing a retiring and reserved disposition he did not make friends readily, but, hidden by this reserve, one found a staunch and loyal fellow worker. He was the soul of honour and carried with him an old-world courtesy—rare in his generation. His achievements have been an impetus to the progress of medicine, and his name will endure on the scroll of time. Those who knew him best will cherish the memory of an indefatigable student and worker, untarnished by selfishness and petty jealousy.

His researches, at a time when the evil effects of x rays were unknown, led to years of suffering, which undermined his strength and in the end killed him. Through it all he bore his sorrows and losses with a great fortitude and courage. Of Dawson Turner it may well be said, in the heroic endeavour to save human life, he serves God best who most nobly serves humanity.

[The photograph reproduced above is by the Central Press.]