

Obituary.

G. NEWTON PITT, M.D., F.R.C.P.,
Consulting Physician to Guy's Hospital.

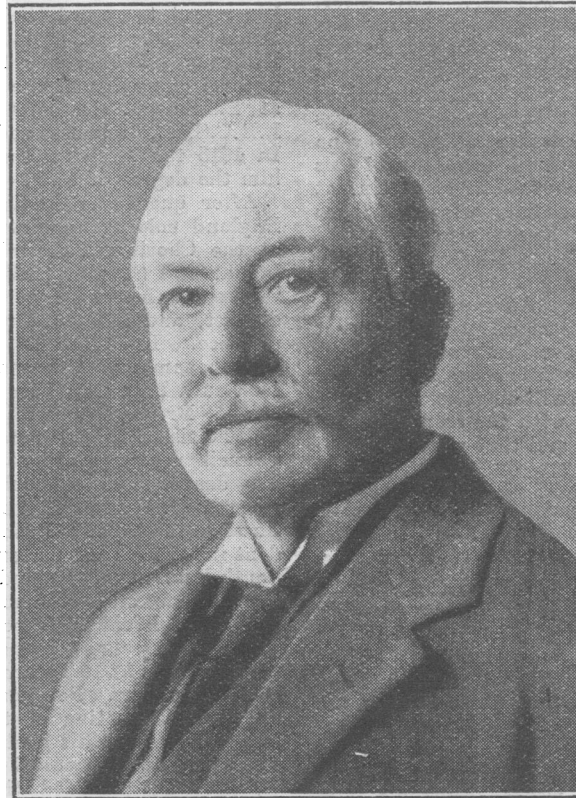
WE much regret to announce the death, on February 22nd, at Walton-on-Thames, after a short illness, of Dr. G. Newton Pitt, for many years physician to Guy's Hospital, and for the past fifteen years intimately associated with the work of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund.

George Newton Pitt was born in London on October 15th, 1853, the eldest son of George Pitt of Sutton, Surrey. From Christ's College, Finchley, he went to Clare College, Cambridge, with a scholarship, and was placed tenth wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos of 1876. In 1879 he was elected a Fellow of Clare College, and during the tenure of his Fellowship studied medicine at Cambridge and at Guy's, qualifying as M.R.C.S. in 1881. In 1884 he graduated M.D., B.Ch.Cantab., and obtained the M.R.C.P. Lond. diploma. In 1890, the year after his election as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Dr. Pitt was appointed Goulstonian lecturer. In 1903-7 he served as examiner to the College, was a member of the Council in 1907-9, Bradshaw lecturer in 1910, censor in 1914-15, and senior censor in 1918. His Goulstonian Lectures on "Some cerebral lesions" were published in the first volume of the *British Medical Journal* for 1890, and his Bradshaw Lectures on "The results of bronchial obstruction" appeared, with illustrations, in our issue of December 10th, 1910. From 1887 onwards Dr. Newton Pitt was a member of the staff of Guy's Hospital, serving in turn as demonstrator in morbid anatomy, assistant physician, physician and lecturer in medicine, and, finally, as consulting physician. In the early part of his career he was also assistant physician to the East London Hospital for Children at Shadwell, and was for some time an examiner in medicine to the Universities of Cambridge and London. For his war services as major, attached to the 2nd London Territorial General Hospital, he received the O.B.E.

Dr. Newton Pitt was for many years a member of the British Medical Association; he held office as vice-president of the Section of Pathology at the Annual Meeting of the Association at Manchester in 1902, and as vice-president of the Section of Medicine when the Association held its Annual Meeting at Exeter in 1907. Besides his Goulstonian and Bradshaw Lectures, and contributions to Allbutt's *System of Medicine* and Allen's *Manual of Medicine*, he was the author of a number of papers in *Guy's Hospital Reports*, and between 1901 and 1908 contributed eight articles to the *British Medical Journal*, mainly on diseases of the heart and of the central nervous system. His presidential oration before the Hunterian Society was entitled "John Hunter as a physician and his relation to the medical societies of the last century." To his invaluable work for the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, from the time of his appointment as honorary secretary in 1914, a tribute is paid by his former colleagues in the appreciations printed below.

His active years at Guy's were marked by unremitting attention to the patients under his care, and to his duties

as a teacher of clinical medicine. His intimate knowledge of morbid anatomy, gained as a demonstrator in this subject over several years, illuminated the bedside teaching, and gave an authority to his instruction of the highest order, while his constant attendance at operations which he had advised gave him a knowledge of living pathology and that form of information so essential to a physician dealing with acute abdominal conditions. His clear logical mind enabled him in his teaching to sift the material, to free it from ambiguities, and present the subject in hand in a manner to be grasped by the student. The teaching was illustrated from a wide and well-garnered experience, was never diffuse, and the essentials were impressed as by the hand of a master. These same qualities were of signal service in the management of the medical school, and on the various committees co-ordinating the relation between the hospital and the school, where his opinion, always given after mature reflection based upon a knowledge of the subject which he had been at pains to acquire, carried great weight.



DR. NEWTON PITT.

Sir CHARTERS SYMONDS, consulting surgeon to Guy's Hospital and honorary treasurer of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, writes:

As a colleague Dr. Newton Pitt gained the esteem and affection of all the members of the staff, and was beloved by the students, many of whom became his intimate friends. For many years he was consulting physician to the London Orphan School, where his services were frequently called upon. The Royal Medical Benevolent Fund has lost in Dr. Newton Pitt an honorary secretary who for fifteen years gave devoted service to the relief of numbers of the profession and their dependants. It was his special part to investigate all applications, by examination of statements, and often by personal interviews. Over this he spared no trouble, and when the application was placed before the committee his award was almost invariably accepted. Before the present secretary was appointed and the present offices were established the duties demanded daily super-

vision, a special corner of his study being set apart for the purpose. He had an intimate knowledge of both annuitants and grantees, and, while always sympathetic, was careful to see that charity was wisely distributed, and that overlapping of other bodies was safeguarded. His financial abilities were of no mean order, and his knowledge of accounts always of value. It will be difficult to find another with so original a mind, of so wide an experience, with such a knowledge of the needs of the profession, and one who is able and willing to sacrifice so much of his leisure to fill his place. No one seeing his clear mental grasp of a problem, his untiring energy, his deep interest in the affairs of the Fund, as exhibited at the meeting in the week preceding his death, could but anticipate many years of active work. It is not improbable that the severe attack of influenzal pneumonia last year seriously weakened his powers of resistance.

Dr. JOHN FAWCETT, consulting physician to Guy's Hospital, writes:

Dr. Newton Pitt was one of the three physicians appointed on the staff of Guy's in 1887 to fill the vacancies resulting from the rapid promotion among the junior members which ensued, in the main, as a sequence of the

appalling series of disasters which befel the medical staff from the year 1883 to 1887; I mean the deaths of those famous physicians, Fagge, Moxon, Mahomed, and Carrington. Dr. Leonard Woodridge and Dr. Cooper Perry, as he then was, were the other two physicians appointed at the same time, and before two years were out Guy's had lost that brilliant genius Woodridge, to be followed but a few years later by the deaths of Dr. Washbourn and Dr. J. H. Bryant. Dr. Pitt came to Guy's with a great reputation from Cambridge, where he had taken high rank as a wrangler, and later was elected a Fellow of his College, Clare. Throughout his period of service on the active staff of Guy's, which ended in 1913, he entered heart and soul into all the activities of both the hospital and its school.

Perhaps the features which we, as students, remember best were, first, his superabundant energy, the almost meticulous thoroughness with which he investigated the cases under his care, especially those in relation to the central nervous system, in which he was particularly interested, and where he did such good pioneer work. His brain to us seemed teeming with so many facts, with time as the sole brake to the expression of what he could do and say, and where we learned, meanwhile, of many things of which we had not even dreamt before. Fatigue was altogether foreign to his mind and nature, although by no means so to the somewhat exhausted members of his "firm," male and female, who followed in his train, at the end of a long round. Some years later, when no longer a student, I ventured to ask him if he was ever tired, and he replied, "I don't remember it," and I believe he spoke the truth. But some few days ago I met him in the "Tube" on his way to the Alliance Assurance Company, where he had been one of the medical officers for a great number of years, and he looked as well, almost as young, and spoke as robustly as ever. The only complaint he had to make was that someone had advised him recently to have all, or most of his teeth extracted, with the result that he had been uncomfortable ever since, and that was all he had to say in reference to the present state of his health. It seems impossible to realize that he is gone, and that we, and all who knew him so well at Guy's and elsewhere, have lost a very dear friend.

The other chief characteristics to my mind, and, indeed, to that of others also, were his geniality, his good humour, his love for his fellow man, particularly if he came from Guy's, and his wish to do something for him if he could. He was such a gentleman. As students we always spoke of him as "dear old Pitt"; irreverent it was, but the phrase seems to enshrine his memory, and to describe with truth the affectionate regard in which he was held by all the students, by his own house-physicians, and by his colleagues on the staff—and what can man want more! When the war came, though over 60 years of age, Pitt worked devotedly from first to last at the 2nd London General Hospital, where he held the rank of major; and also, if I recollect aright, he acted as physician at another war hospital, King George's, as it was called.

Outside Guy's the work for which he will, and should, ever be remembered is that which he did for the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund. Sir Charters Symonds recalls in the *Times* of to-day (February 26th) how that Pitt became secretary of the Fund in 1914, and that to Pitt fell a large part of the additional work entailed in the collection, the management, and the distribution of the £20,000 collected from the medical profession, with the added £10,000 from the National Relief Fund. The money was to assist financially the medical officers, especially of the Territorial Army, who had suffered loss either themselves, or, it might be, their families, from whom the breadwinner had been taken or who had died. Ever since Pitt became secretary the interests of the Fund were his constant care, and, while anxious to see it develop on a wider and more broadly comprehensive basis, yet he never failed to devote daily consideration to the numerous cases which came for relief. To those who might wish to do something to perpetuate their affection for Dr. Pitt I can imagine nothing which would have more appealed to him than an attempt to render this Fund even more generally recognized in our profession than it is at present, to have it regarded as a liability which every medical man should incur by becoming an annual

subscriber. Dr. Pitt was ever grateful for the support accorded to the Fund, increasingly so of recent years, by the members of the British Medical Association.

This brief sketch, written at such short notice, does but meagrely fulfil its aim; but it may perchance serve in part, though inadequately, to express the feelings and thoughts of some who knew Pitt well, and who realize to the full how rich was his life for others, and therefore so happy for himself. He loved his life and his work, and, sad as we are to lose him, yet we recognize that, not only did he play the game hard throughout his long life, but that he put many a good innings to the credit of his side.

[The photograph of Dr. Newton Pitt is by Elliott and Fry, Ltd., London.]

DENIS WALSHE, M.D.,

Past-President, South-Eastern of Ireland Branch, British Medical Association.

WE regret to record the death, at the age of 85, of Dr. Denis Walshe, which took place at his home in county Kilkenny on February 21st. Dr. Walshe received his medical education at the Catholic University, Dublin, and at Edinburgh. In 1869 he obtained the L.R.C.P. and L.R.C.S.Ed. diplomas, and in 1871 the L.R.C.P.I. and L.M. In 1915 the National University of Ireland conferred on him the degree of M.D. (*honoris causa*).

After qualifying Denis Walshe spent several years in England holding appointments as resident medical officer at the Chorlton Hospital, Manchester, and later at the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, London. On returning to Ireland he was appointed to the Tiscoffin Dispensary district, and proceeded to build up an extensive private practice. In 1883 he became medical officer to the Graigenamanagh Dispensary District, and in 1903 coroner for South Kilkenny, both of which offices he held until his death. Dr. Walshe was an active and loyal member of the British Medical Association. He was a member of Council nearly continuously from 1900 to the day of his death, and a member of the Irish Committee since 1923. In 1900 he was a member of the South-Eastern of Ireland Branch Council, becoming its president in 1901. He represented the Kilkenny Division of the South-Eastern of Ireland Branch Council in 1916, and the Carlow and Kilkenny Division during the period 1917-29. From 1916 he was a member of the South-Eastern of Ireland Branch Ethical Committee, and since the passing of the Insurance Act he was chairman of the local committee. For nearly sixty years he never missed an Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association; indeed, although his health was so poor last year that he was urged by his medical friends not to undertake the long journey, he attended the Annual Meeting at Cardiff. A few days before his death he received a letter from Dr. Alfred Cox, the Medical Secretary, which he greatly appreciated, and showed with pride to his medical friends when they called to see him, and the Council at its last meeting also asked the Chairman of Council to send its wishes for his recovery and its appreciation of all his good work for the Association. Denis Walshe was a genial and companionable friend and the soul of hospitality. His funeral was attended by a large number of medical colleagues and friends, including Dr. T. Hennessy (Irish Medical Secretary), who travelled from Dublin to be present.

Dr. ALFRED COX writes: The Association has had many loyal and devoted members in Ireland, but none in my time whose personality was so distinctively associated with those lovable and humorous qualities one is inclined to think of as being peculiarly Irish. I never realized what a power he was for good until I met Dr. Walshe on his own ground in his own Branch two years ago. I then saw what a great factor he had been in preventing among the medical profession the growth of any semblance of a division between North and South. During times of great stress and difficulty he kept the B.M.A. flag flying (and thereby preserved the union of the Irish medical profession), being backed in this by others in both South and North. For this alone he deserves our gratitude and remembrance. But many of us will miss even more the loss of that exceedingly