

Obituary

CHARLES ROBERTS, F.R.C.S.

Honorary Consulting Surgeon, Manchester Royal Infirmary
and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital

Charles Roberts, the son of Samuel Roberts, was born at Colnbrook, Slough, in 1874. His medical education was received at the Middlesex Hospital, at which he entered with a scholarship and exhibition. He qualified for practice with the M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. diplomas in 1896, taking also the M.B., B.S. degrees of London University in the same year, with honours. In the intermediate examination he had gained first-class honours, qualifying for a gold medal in anatomy and honours in materia medica. After qualifying he filled several resident posts in his hospital: house-surgeon, house-physician, obstetric house-physician, casualty officer.

In 1899 he obtained the diploma of F.R.C.S.Eng. He then saw active service during the Boer War, in which he was civil surgeon to the South African Field Force and received two medals.

In 1901 Roberts was appointed resident surgical officer to the Manchester Royal Infirmary—a rare distinction for one trained in another school of medicine. During his tenure of this post he fully bore out the promise of his successful academic career, and proved to be a sound and capable surgeon and good administrator. After two years in this most valuable and responsible post he began consulting practice in Manchester, and was appointed honorary surgeon to the Royal Children's Hospital, Pendlebury, which had become so well known by the work of Henry Ashby and George Arthur Wright, both also from London schools. Roberts edited the surgical section of the last edition of Wright and Ashby's monograph on diseases of children. From 1905 to 1910 he broadened his surgical experience in the post of surgical officer and medical superintendent at the Christie Cancer Hospital. In the following year he was appointed honorary assistant surgeon to the Manchester Royal Infirmary, and continued on its acting staff until last year, when he attained the age limit of 60 and was appointed honorary consulting surgeon, a similar post to which he also held at the Children's Hospital. When the great war broke out Roberts was off to France at once in August with the first contingent of troops, being attached to the 18th Field Ambulance. After returning home he continued on the surgical staff of the Second Western General Hospital. He was a lecturer on clinical and practical surgery in the University of Manchester, and was very popular with the students for his attractive and capable teaching methods and his general ability.

Charles Roberts never tried to be a "showman" in his surgical work, but he was remarkably sound, both in his clinical judgement and in his operating. Modest about his own achievements, and tolerant of the views of others, he was not a frequent contributor to surgical literature, but when he wrote he always had something worth recording. Perhaps the subject with which his name will be most permanently associated is that of extroversion of the bladder. His wide experience of this condition while he was on the active staff of the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital enabled him to devise an improved method of transplanting the trigone of the bladder into the rectum, and the technique of this operation he described in the medical journals some years ago. But it is as a teacher rather than as an originator of surgical methods that he will be best remembered. He was at his happiest in the informal atmosphere of the out-patient department, or of the ward round with his dressers. He could always get the best out of a student, and the secret of this was his imperturbable good humour and lack of any sarcasm or

intellectual pride. He had a very unusual and striking gift in attracting the confidence of his small patients, and he was very much liked and respected by his house-surgeons for his sympathetic, human, helpful nature.

He took a keen part in the scientific society work of Manchester, and was a member of the Royal Society of Medicine and of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland. When the British Medical Association held its meeting in Manchester in 1929 he was a vice-president of the Section of Surgery.

In his hours of ease he was somewhat of a poultry fancier, and spent much time in looking after his fowls and in his fine garden. He married Ethel Annie Nicholson, one-time lady superintendent at Pendlebury Hospital, who predeceased him. A son and a daughter are following as students in his footsteps.

After a long illness bravely borne Dr. WILLIAM ADAM BRECHIN died at Carnoustie on May 31st. He was a son of ex-Baillie Matthew Brechin of Glasgow, and was educated at Glasgow High School, where he was "dux" in modern languages in 1908. Proceeding to Glasgow University, he graduated M.B., Ch.B. in 1913, and was a resident in the Royal Infirmary under Mr. William Rutherford and Dr. John Henderson. On the outbreak of war in August, 1914, he volunteered, and was attached to the Notts and Derby Regiment. In 1915 he served in Egypt, and took part in the Senussi Campaign, and was attached to the Duke of Westminster's expedition in the Tara. He afterwards served in Palestine, and was finally attached to the Indian Hospital, Kintara. For his work in Egypt he was awarded the Military Cross, and was twice mentioned in dispatches. His marriage took place when on leave in 1918 to Miss Jessie McOnie, Buchlyvie. In 1920 he retired from the R.A.M.C. with the rank of major, and early in 1921 he took over the practice of Dr. Norman J. McKie in Newton Stewart. In 1925 trouble which had threatened in Egypt developed, and he was forced to retire from practice. He proceeded to South Africa to try to regain his health. Last year he returned to this country, intending to go back to South Africa after visiting his people, but was unable to do so. He bore his long illness with great patience.

The death occurred at Greenway Court, Hollingbourne, on April 26th of Dr. J. TEMPERLEY GREY, O.B.E., who for many years practised at Lenham and Harrietsham. He received his medical education at Bristol, and qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in 1888. Dr. Grey was a man of quiet and unassuming manner, and his genial and kindly disposition won him many friends and inspired hope and confidence in those who became his patients. He held the post of medical officer of health to the Hollingbourne Rural District Council. During the war he converted his own house into a V.A.D. hospital, as well as the village hall at Lenham. A large number of wounded passed through his hands. For this service he was awarded the Order of the British Empire.

Dr. JOHN STOKES of Sheffield, who died on June 5th, in his seventieth year, was a distinguished Freemason as well as a practical exponent of medicine and the law. His student days had been spent in Sheffield and Durham; he graduated M.B., B.S. of the latter university in 1887, and in the same year obtained the diploma M.R.C.S. Two years later he became a licentiate in sanitary science, and in the following year proceeded M.D. His first medical appointments were those of ophthalmic assistant to the Newcastle-on-Tyne Royal Infirmary, house-surgeon to the Firvale Hospital, and resident surgeon to the Salford Royal Hospital. His outlook then widened further. He took the D.P.H. in 1904, graduated M.A. in Sheffield in 1909, B.Sc. in London in 1911, and LL.B. in 1912. In 1906 he had been admitted as Barrister-at-law at the Inner Temple.