

Obituary

CHARLES ARTHUR BRIGSTOCKE, M.R.C.S.

We regret to record the death on August 25th, at the age of 92, of Dr. C. A. Brigstocke of Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. A native of Carmarthenshire, Dr. Brigstocke qualified M.R.C.S. and L.S.A. in 1865, having received his medical education at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. He joined the B.M.A. four years later. After acting as resident medical officer of the Carmarthenshire Infirmary he practised at Llanelly, where he was assistant medical officer to the tinplate workers. It was during this period that he played such a notable part in stamping out the cholera outbreak of 1866. He worked day and night for weeks, and when later he left the district he was presented with a testimonial by the townspeople. In 1874 he went to practise in Cardigan, where he stayed for six years, and held the position of deputy coroner for South Cardiganshire. Eventually he settled in Haverfordwest, where he held the post of medical officer of health for forty-three years. He was a very popular figure in this borough and the neighbouring villages.

Dr. OSCAR WILLIAMS, chairman of the South-West Wales Division of the B.M.A., writes:

Dr. Brigstocke was a remarkable old gentleman in many ways. Possessing wonderful vitality, he continued to practise until he was 87 years of age, only retiring in January, 1930—in fact, for two years afterwards he continued to discharge the duties of borough medical officer of health. He was a fine example of the old family doctor, top-hatted and frock-coated. Quickly winning the confidence of his patients by his competence, it was not long before he had built up an extensive practice and acquired the reputation of being an able obstetrician. He was a firm believer in the simple life, and, while keeping abreast with the advances in medical science and surgery, he still reposed his greatest faith in the efficacy of abstemiousness.

As medical officer he held strong views on public health questions, and was largely responsible for many of the improvements in Haverfordwest's water, sanitary, and other services. We can fairly say that he was a pillar of the British Medical Association in West Wales; he was president of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Branch in 1924-5. To the younger medical men who commenced practice after the war Dr. Brigstocke's fine figure, his dress so typical of what we thought the best type of family practitioner's should be, was an inspiration and a model, while his addresses as chairman and his advice in council were of the utmost value to the Division as a whole and to each single member individually. His reminiscences of midwifery in the days before midwives, of surgery before the days of antiseptics, and of fighting the scourges of cholera and other epidemics, now fortunately almost unknown in this country, were a revelation to all practitioners who could not possibly have known any such conditions. He continued to attend meetings until three years ago, although each journey meant travelling 40 miles either way, and when at last he felt compelled to resign his membership of the Association it was unanimously decided to make him an honorary member of the Division and Branch of which he was the oldest and in many ways the most distinguished member.

Amongst other things, Dr. Brigstocke was a Fellow of the Institute of Public Health, and held the post of president of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Medical Association. For many years he represented the medical practitioners on the County Insurance Committee, passing through the Chair. A keen geologist, he had a wonderful collection of specimens from all parts of the world. He

was the author of a paper on asiatic cholera, which he wrote following his experiences at Llanelly, and among his other medical literary contributions was an article on haemophilia. Dr. Brigstocke never courted publicity, but he was always ready to express his views on matters of health. His was for generations a familiar and beloved figure in Haverfordwest, and the older people especially will share in the sorrow which his death has caused.

HUGH WILLIAM ACTON, C.I.E., M.R.C.S.

Lieut.-Colonel I.M.S. (ret.)

We regret to announce the death on August 23rd, and only fifteen days after his retirement, of Lieut.-Colonel H. W. Acton. Born in Calcutta in 1883, he was educated at Gravesend, Bedford, and the Middlesex Hospital. He qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., in 1905, and before entering the Indian Medical Service in 1907 held the posts of house-physician at the Middlesex and clinical assistant at the Chelsea Hospital for Women.

On enrolment he was drafted to the Frontier as medical officer of the 53rd Sikhs at Peshawar, and it was not until 1910 that he became assistant director of the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli, which was at that time the centre for antirabic treatment in India. He held this post until 1916, when he was recalled to military duty and sent to Mesopotamia. He served with the Mediterranean forces for nearly five years, and was mentioned in dispatches in 1919. Two years later, with the rank of major, he was appointed to the chair of tropical pathology and bacteriology in the newly founded School of Tropical Medicine at Calcutta. In this post he showed great ability, and during the succeeding twelve years proved his versatility by acting as professor of helminthology, taking charge of the department of dermatology, and on several occasions acting as director and head of the school, besides being in charge of the Carmichael Hospital for Tropical Diseases. He was sent back to England on sick leave in 1933.

In his capacity as teacher Colonel Acton showed great clarity of mind, and held the attention of those whom he set out to instruct. His abilities extended beyond teaching to administration, while in medical research his active and inquiring mind was always ready to grasp the essentials of any problem with which he was faced. Amongst many other studies he investigated the action of the cinchona alkaloids on malarial parasites; the relation in these alkaloids of chemical formula to optical and therapeutic activity; and the cause of the toxic effects of quinine administered intravenously and intramuscularly. In 1928 he published, in conjunction with Lieut.-Colonel R. Knowles, his book *On the Dysenteries of India*.

In recent times his theory of entamoeba carriers was the subject of an interesting discussion at the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine. Other subjects of investigation included snake venom, lathyrism, epidemic dropsy, and many aspects of protozoology.

Colonel Acton's death has come as a great blow to a wide circle of friends and colleagues. He is survived by a widow and two sons.

We regret to announce the death on September 1st of Dr. JAMES REID of St. Helens, Lancs. Dr. Reid, who was in his eighty-first year, was a native of the Orkneys and was born at Kirkwall, where his father was Provost and one of the chief shipping merchants. He qualified M.B., C.M. at Edinburgh in 1879 and went to St. Helens the next year as assistant to Drs. Twyford and Jameson, afterwards becoming a partner. Here he worked in practice until 1928, when he retired to live at Bognor Regis. For close on forty years he had acted as the St. Helens police surgeon, and his excellent work for the