

Obituary

SIR D'ARCY POWER, K.B.E., F.R.C.S., F.S.A.

Surgeon and Medical Historian

As briefly announced in our last issue, Sir D'Arcy Power, surgeon, medical historian, biographer, and librarian, died on May 18 at his home at Northwood, Middlesex, to which he had lately moved after many years in Chandos Street, Cavendish Square. He was spared the news, made public a day or two after his death, of the damage caused by enemy action to the Royal College of Surgeons and its possessions which he had served so devotedly for over half a century. No English surgeon has ever been held in more affectionate regard in his own and other countries.

D'Arcy Power was born in London in 1855, the son of Henry Power, who died in 1911 at the age of 82, after serving St. Bartholomew's as ophthalmic surgeon for most of his working life. In a tribute to his father D'Arcy Power once wrote that his versatility, friendliness, and courtesy showed his Southern Irish ancestry, and his dogged perseverance was derived from a Dutch and a Quaker strain. Certainly the same qualities, however derived, were characteristic of the son. He was educated at St. Marylebone and All Souls' Grammar School and later at Merchant Taylors' in the City, where, at 17, he was awarded the prize as the boy best fitted for a merchant's office. This fate was averted, and he matriculated at Oxford, from New College, in 1874, and obtained an open exhibition at Exeter College in 1877. He then became demonstrator to the University, lecturer on physiology at Magdalen, gained a first-class in the honours school of natural science in 1878, and proceeded M.A. in 1881.

In 1878 he entered St. Bartholomew's, with which he was to identify himself as one of its most beloved and devoted sons. In a lecture given in later life, after recounting the jealousies and rivalries of the older Bart's, he described how when he came to the hospital as a young man of 23 he found himself among a "most intelligent body," who at once appointed him a teacher, invited him to their Christmas dinner, and told him they had given him the opportunity of winning his spurs should he be so inclined. The whole staff of the hospital, which then numbered twenty-eight, were his good friends. The teaching post to which he was assigned was that of assistant demonstrator of physiology. In 1882, the year of his qualification, he became house-surgeon to Sir William Savory. He once recalled that at the time he was assisting Savory in the theatre a single pair of forceps was alone provided to arrest bleeding even in so large an operation as amputation of the thigh.

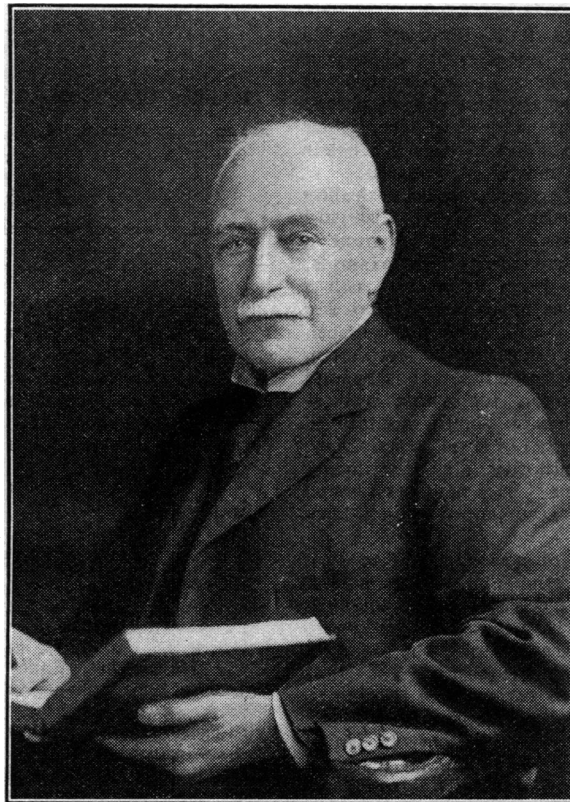
His entrance into consulting practice may be said to have dated from 1885-6 when he was appointed surgeon to the Metropolitan Dispensary and assistant surgeon to the Victoria Hospital for Children. He retained the post of curator to the museum at St. Bartholomew's, and from 1889 to 1901 he was demonstrator of practical and of

operative surgery at that hospital, and of surgical pathology from 1901 to 1904. Like John Hunter, he took an interest in comparative medicine, and from 1890 to 1903 he lectured on histology and physiology at the Royal Veterinary College. In 1898 he was elected assistant surgeon at St. Bartholomew's on the resignation of Sir Thomas Smith, and he became full surgeon in 1904 on the resignation of John Langton. This position he held until 1920, when he was made consulting surgeon. He had the reputation of being a good all-round surgeon who showed at his best in an emergency operation.

His election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons had taken place in 1883, the year after he qualified. Six years later he had become an examiner in physiology for the Fellowship, a position he held for thirteen years. In 1896-7 he was Hunterian professor of surgery and pathology. He became a member of the College Council, at the same time as the late Lord Moynihan, in 1912, was re-elected in 1920, and made vice-president in 1921, and again in 1922. In 1919 he was Bradshaw Lecturer, in the following year Vicary Lecturer, and in 1925 Hunterian Orator. He represented the College

on many important bodies—the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, the University of Bristol, and Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses among others—and he was the College delegate at the International Historical Congress in London in 1913, the centenary celebrations of the Académie de Médecine de Paris in 1920, and the opening of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons at Melbourne in 1935. Of the many offices he held at the College, one, that of honorary librarian, was created for him. No one had greater knowledge of the treasures of the library or spent more time in its precincts. He was also at various times examiner for the Universities of Cambridge and Durham, Queen's University, Belfast, and the National University of Ireland.

But it is as a writer that Sir D'Arcy Power has the largest of his many claims to remembrance. His first published writing appeared in 1877. It was entitled "On the Albuminous Substances which occur in Urine in Albuminuria," and was written with Sir Lauder Brunton for St. Bartholomew's Hospital Reports. His first book, a manual for the physiological laboratory, written with Dr. Vincent Harris, was published within the next five years. His first clinical paper, notes on a case of congenital locomotor ataxia, from the wards of Dr. Samuel Gee, bears the date 1882. His first venture into the history of medicine was his admirable edition of South's "Memorials of the Craft of Surgery" (1886), prepared at the request of Sir James Paget, who wrote an introduction. This was followed by a long series of unsigned historical articles in the *British Medical Journal*. He "kept his head above water," to use his own phrase, by "devilling" for Ernest Hart, the then Editor, whom he described as a master in the art of extracting "copy" in the form of articles and abstracts at a moment's notice. Hart's encouragement, and not less his criticism, which was sometimes caustic, served the literary apprentice in good stead. Since those early days we are glad to have published under "Nova et Vetera" or other title many an attractive and scholarly note from his pen, not to mention a large number of articles on clinical subjects and many reviews of books.



In 1931, on his seventy-fifth birthday, and on the initiative of the Osler Club, Sir D'Arcy was presented by subscribers with a volume of his "Selected Writings." To that volume is appended a short-title bibliography of his contributions to literature; it contains more than 600 entries. Many of these are short "lives" of medical and other worthies in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, to which his first contribution was made in 1893. In addition to biographies he wrote numerous articles on historical subjects connected with medicine, more especially the medicine of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century in England. In all this research and writing he was far from being the mere specialized antiquarian. He had a keen sense for the quaint and amusing, and a turn of his pen would give a bygone incident or practice its full human quality. The patience and skill which he displayed in illuminating the byways of medical history are illustrated in his presidential address to the Medical Society of London on "John Ward and his Diary." John Ward was a medically minded parson of Stratford-on-Avon in the seventeenth century, and the address was the outcome of four years' work, off and on, in transcribing sixteen small books of crabbed writing. In these out-of-the-way fields Sir D'Arcy Power was just as eager and inexhaustible as when he was on the more open ground of the work of Harvey and of Hunter, the history of hospitals, and the craft of surgery. One of his most valuable pieces of medical biography, carried out with the help of his colleagues, W. G. Spencer and G. E. Gask, was his revision of the biographical notices of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons from 1843, when the diploma was first instituted. These had been drawn up with great patience by Victor Plarr, librarian of the College for many years, but never published in his lifetime. The work was brought up to date by D'Arcy Power and prepared for publication in 1930.

But it must not be supposed that he employed his writing only on historical subjects. He wrote extensively on cancer and on the surgery of the abdomen. Thus the bibliography above mentioned includes 77 articles on abdominal surgery, 39 on malignant diseases, 23 on orthopaedics, 12 on intussusception. Scarcely a number of the *British Journal of Surgery* appeared from 1913 onwards without some contribution from him. In 1895 he wrote his "Surgical Diseases of Children," and in 1915 an Oxford primer on "Wounds in War," and he was co-author of a "Handbook of Surgical Pathology" and a work on "Diseases of Joints."

No man was better known in the medical society life of London. He had been president of the Medical Society, the Harveian Society, and the Sections of History of Medicine and of Comparative Medicine of the Royal Society of Medicine; he was on the council of the Pathological Society and the British Orthopaedics Society. He had become a member of the British Medical Association in 1892, and was a sectional officer at various Annual Meetings and president of the Section of Surgery in 1926. He was corresponding member of several foreign societies, and one of the secretaries of the National Committee for the four International Congresses of Medicine which were held in various capitals between 1900 and 1909. He was vice-president of the London meeting of the International Society of the History of Medicine in 1921 and honorary president of the Geneva meeting in 1925. In 1938 he was honorary president of the International Society of Surgery. In 1924 he went to America, was for two months visiting surgeon-in-chief of the Peter Brigham Bent Hospital, Boston, and was made an honorary Fellow of the American Surgical Association at Baltimore, where he delivered an address on "How the Tradition of British Surgery came to America," with some information about the earliest English teachers to cross the Atlantic in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In 1930 a small work of his, "Medicine in the British Isles," was published in New York.

Many societies outside medicine claimed his interest. He was the founder of the Samuel Pepys Club; he wrote a delightful medical history of Mr. and Mrs. Pepys, discovered who performed lithotomy on Samuel, and even prescribed glasses which would have enabled him to continue his diary. He was a prominent figure in the Society of Antiquaries and the Bibliographical Society, and was great among the Freemasons, founder of the Rahere Lodge

at St. Bartholomew's. The building of the new Freemasons' Hospital at Hammersmith was a project near to his heart. The writer of this notice remembers being conducted round that building by Sir D'Arcy, who, in spite of his lameness and of entreaties not so to fatigue himself, insisted on accompanying his visitor to every floor and out on to the roof.

Many other activities in this full life can only be mentioned—his work for many years on behalf of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, as visitor for King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, as chairman of Pinewood Sanatorium, as member for eighteen years of the Faculty of Medicine of London University, as member of the Board of Management of the Metropolitan Convalescent Institution. Even eighty-five years seems too short to crowd in all this activity.

At the outbreak of the last war he became lieutenant-colonel R.A.M.C.(T.) and was officer in charge of the First London General Hospital (T.F.), and later on of its Surgical Division. He was also consulting surgeon to the military hospital at Bromley and surgeon to the Officers' Hospital at Fishmongers' Hall in the City. It was for this relatively brief service in military uniform, not for his lifetime in the library, that he received his knighthood in 1919.

In 1882 he married Eleanor, daughter of G. H. Fosbroke, M.R.C.S., of Yorkshire, who died in 1923. One of his sons was killed in the second battle of Ypres in 1915; the other, Group Captain D'Arcy Power, is in the R.A.F. Medical Service.

Long as is the catalogue of his achievements and distinctions and manifold as are his contributions to the lore of medicine, the outstanding thing which those who knew him will recall will be his unassuming friendliness, his cheery disposition, and his real beauty of character.

A note on some outstanding items in Sir D'Arcy Power's personal library, which he had instructed Messrs. Sotheby to sell next month, will be found at page 830 of this issue of the *Journal*.

[The portrait reproduced is by Lafayette.]

W. H. GIBSON, M.B., AND L. F. SKINNIDER, M.B.

We regret to announce the deaths, through enemy action, of two Paisley practitioners, Dr. William Hamilton Gibson and Dr. Leo Francis Skinnider.

Dr. Gibson graduated in medicine at Glasgow University early in the last war and served with the R.A.M.C. at home and abroad. On demobilization he took over the old-established practice of Dr. William Russell of Paisley. He soon began to take an interest in public affairs, and for some years served on the town council, resigning in 1930, under the conditions of the new Local Government Act, on his appointment as visiting physician to two hospitals of the local authority—Craw Road and Auchentalie. He was elected to the magistracy in 1928. He was examiner to the St. Andrew's Association, lecturer to the Provident Co-operative Ambulance Corps, honorary surgeon to the Boy Scout movement, and the leading figure in the local branch of the British Legion in its work in helping men who had served in the last war. He had been chairman of the Panel Committee and he was a member of the British Medical Association, having been elected in 1921. Another of his activities was his directorship of the Royal Victoria Eye Infirmary, the chairman of which, at a meeting of the directors following his death, spoke of the great indebtedness of that institution to Dr. Gibson for his thirteen years' service.

Dr. L. F. Skinnider was a rather younger man. He graduated at Glasgow in 1924 and had been for fifteen years in practice in Paisley, where his father, the late Mr. A. S. Skinnider, was for a great many years a well-known journalist. He also was a member of the Paisley Panel Committee and, since the time of his qualification, of the British Medical Association. Both men were highly respected in the local community, especially by their medical colleagues, and their tragic death is keenly felt. Dr. Gibson is survived by his wife and three children; Dr. Skinnider, who was a widower, by two small sons.

The sudden and tragic death of WILLIAM GRAY, caused by enemy action in Liverpool while carrying out his duties, was a great shock to his many friends in Edinburgh. He came from Canada in 1927 and graduated in Edinburgh in 1932. As a student (writes G. L. C.) he acted as one of the unqualified assistants in my surgical clinic in 1930. After graduating, the managers of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary appointed him, at my request, resident house-surgeon to the wards under my charge. On the termination of this appointment, Mr. Pirie Watson, who, as assistant surgeon, had seen his good work, appointed him resident surgeon at Leith Hospital. Not content with a year of hospital work after graduation, Gray then went to Liverpool and specialized in orthopaedic surgery, obtaining the M.Ch. (Orth.) degree in Liverpool in 1937. Two years later he obtained the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. At the time of his death he was deputy medical superintendent, Mill Road Infirmary, Liverpool. William Gray's record since graduation, so far as work is concerned, speaks for itself, but he had something more than ability—a charm, difficult to define, due to a bright personality, a lovable disposition, and a quiet musical voice, all of which endeared him to those who knew him. A promising career has been ruthlessly cut short. The deepest sympathy of all his friends is extended to his widow and his parents in Canada.

Dr. JOHN SLIGHT GRAY has been reported killed by enemy action in April, 1941, aged 28. He was the younger son of Mr. and Mrs. George Gray, of Riselaw Crescent, Edinburgh, and took the M.B. and Ch.B. at Edinburgh in 1939.*

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

LONDON HOSPITAL MEDICAL COLLEGE

The College Board have made the following awards for 1941-2: Price Scholarship in Science (value £100).—A. J. Dinn. Open University Scholarships (a) (£100).—A. Comfort, Trinity College, Cambridge; (b) (£100).—K. A. A. Wray, King's College, Cambridge, and P. F. Haggart, Downing College, Cambridge (Scholarship divided).

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Diploma in Ophthalmology, 1941

The Board of the Faculty of Medicine gives notice that the two-months course of instruction at the Oxford Eye Hospital will begin on Monday, October 13. The examination will be held beginning on Monday, December 8; names must be received at the University Registry not later than 3 p.m. on Wednesday, November 19.

Medical Notes in Parliament

Duty on Patent Medicines

On May 20, Mr. KEELING asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he was aware that his predecessor, when withdrawing, in response to the views of the House, his proposal to discontinue the taxation of patent medicines, promised to re-examine the question of continuing to tax them, and repeated this promise to a deputation of members, whether the re-examination took place, and with what result. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD replied that on the outbreak of war, in view of the pressure on the time of all concerned, the procedure contemplated by his predecessor was abandoned. Subsequently, however, on August 13 last he gave an undertaking to see, before the next Finance Bill, whether he could not get the parties together and try to get some reasonable solution of the matter. Mr. Keeling was aware of the recent developments in this connexion.

MR. KEELING asked if Sir Kingsley Wood was aware that the only parties consulted were the vendors. Did the Minister think it right that the Government should have violated their express promise without any word of explanation. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD said he thought that the procedure now in operation was the best one possible. They

could not have a long inquiry, but the Minister of Health was in touch with all parties interested in the matter. Viscountess ASOR asked if the advertisement of patent medicines was not one of the scandals which was dealt with in the last war. No one knew why the Government had given in on this.

Liquid Fire Extinguishers

Many chemical liquids, for which the claim is made that they extinguish incendiary bombs, have been tested by the Research and Experiments Department of the Ministry of Home Security. None has been found which can be recommended in preference to water. Mr. MABANE in stating this on May 21 added that some of the liquids being sold are corrosive; some contain caustic substances dangerous to the eyes; others produce fumes and smoke which may be harmful and make fire-fighting difficult.

N.H.I.: Income Limit to be Raised

Mr. ERNEST BROWN announced on May 22 that the Government intended to introduce very shortly legislation to increase the benefits payable under National Health Insurance, in particular, sickness, maternity, and disablement benefits. This legislation could not, in present circumstances, be more than an interim measure designed to give effect to changes in the health insurance scheme necessary to meet wartime conditions. The Government hoped it would be possible to carry through in due course a thorough overhaul of the existing schemes of social insurance, particularly health and pensions insurance and workmen's compensation. It held that the comprehensive survey of the existing schemes which must be an essential preliminary to such legislation should be set on foot at once as part of post-war planning. The survey was to be undertaken forthwith by Mr. Greenwood in association with other Ministers concerned.

The Bill which the Government intended to introduce shortly would, as from the beginning of the next benefit year in January next, increase by 3s. the statutory rates of sickness and disablement benefits payable under the Health Insurance Acts. The sickness benefit for a man would be raised from 15s. to 18s., and his disablement benefit from 7s. 6d. to 10s. 6d. For single women and widows the new rates would be 15s. and 9s. respectively, and for married women 13s. and 8s. Any cash additional benefits would continue to be payable over and above these minimum rates. These changes would be made possible by the payment of State grant on the usual basis and by increasing by 2d. the weekly contributions payable in respect of men and women alike—1d. of this increase to be borne by the employer and 1d. by the insured person. The Bill would also raise to £420, as from January next, the remuneration limit for the compulsory health and pensions insurance of non-manual workers. In addition to other health and pensions rights, this would give to rather fewer than 500,000 fresh persons a title to free medical treatment and attendance. The position thus created was being discussed with the medical profession. Power would also be sought in the Bill to deal with the position in insurance of civilian prisoners of war and other similar war problems.

Ministry of Health Report.—Mr. ERNEST BROWN announced on May 8 that he proposed to issue from the Ministry of Health a summarized report covering the two years ended March 31, 1941, when this material had been collated. Sir FRANCIS FREMANTLE asked whether this reply referred to the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry or to the Report of the Department. Mr. BROWN: I shall do my best to have at least a summary published.

Combatant German Medical Personnel.—On May 20, Mr. SORENSON asked the Secretary of State for War whether he had evidence to show that members of the German Army Medical Corps either were trained in the use of arms or employed them during action against our own or Allied troops. Captain MARGESSON said that no instances had been brought to his notice of the use of arms by German Army medical personnel in action against British or Allied troops, but he was making further inquiries. International law permitted the training of medical personnel in the use of arms in their own defence.

Notes in Brief

The number of death certificates received during the year 1939 in which vaccinia or vaccination was mentioned or the death was attributed to vaccinia or vaccination, and the ages in each case, were as follows: *Non-civilians*: 1 at 20 years. *Civilians*: 1 at 4 months and 1 at 31 years.