

Pregnancy on Life Insurance," *British Medical Journal*, 1898. For many years he acted as medical officer to the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company and to the Century Life Office. Genial in manner and kindly in disposition, Dr. Playfair was highly popular with both his patients and his colleagues. He was a keen sportsman and was noted for his skill with the gun as well as for his success in the fishing competitions with his medical confreres. The interment took place in the Dean Cemetery on September 6th, after a service in St. Andrew's Church, Drumsheugh Gardens, at which the Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians attended. Dr. Playfair is survived by a widow, two daughters, and two sons, one of whom is Air Commodore P. H. L. Playfair, C.B.

FREDERICK GARDINER, M.D., F.R.C.S.ED.

Late Physician for Diseases of the Skin, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary

The death occurred on September 8th at his residence in Manor Place, Edinburgh, after a long illness, of Dr. Frederick Gardiner, who was well known as a dermatologist. Born in 1874, Dr. Gardiner had a distinguished career at Edinburgh University, graduating M.B., C.M. in 1895. After graduation he acted as house-surgeon in Stirling Royal Infirmary. He intended originally to devote himself to mental diseases, and was appointed assistant medical officer to Dundee Royal Asylum. Later, however, in 1901, he took the degree of B.Sc. in public health at Edinburgh, and engaged for a time in general practice, paying special attention to diseases of the skin. He took the M.D. degree, with honours, in 1902, and was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. For some years he was non-resident house-physician to the dermatology department of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, and later became assistant physician, and then physician. On his retirement owing to illness he was appointed consultant to this department.

Early in his career Dr. Gardiner had worked with Sir Robert Philip in the application of x rays to the diagnosis of tuberculosis, and a considerable amount of the pioneer work in connexion with the application of this method of treatment to chronic skin disease was carried out by Dr. Gardiner. His numerous contributions to the current literature included: "Diseases of the Skin," in *Latham and English's System of Treatment*, 1912; "Occupational Dermatitis," *British Journal of Dermatology and Syphilis*, 1922; "Seborrhoea," *Practitioner*, 1932; and he was the author of a successful *Handbook of Skin Diseases*, which had reached a third edition in 1931. Dr. Gardiner held the post of lecturer on diseases of the skin at Edinburgh University, and during the war he acted as consultant dermatologist at the Edinburgh War Hospital, Bangour. In his earlier years of professional life he enjoyed a large general practice, and his quiet, unassuming manner and cheerful disposition endeared him to his patients. As a consultant he was highly popular with his professional colleagues. He is survived by a widow and two sons, one of whom is a member of the medical profession in Edinburgh. The funeral took place at the Edinburgh Crematorium on September 11th.

THE LATE SIR JOSEPH VERCO

We have received from Dr. ALFRED LONDON of North Adelaide the following memoir supplementing the notice published on August 12th (p. 317).

The death of Sir Joseph Verco on July 29th, after a long bout of cardiac trouble, which originally decided his retirement from practice some fourteen years ago, deprives South Australia of its honoured doyen of the medical profession: had he survived three days longer he would have attained to his eighty-second year. J. C. Verco was

the son of old pioneers of this Province, and after an adequate education at a secondary school he was entered as a cadet in the Civil Service: he was appointed to the railway department, and employed in the enumeration and classification of obsolete railway tickets. This occupation did not prove inspiring, and he decided to study medicine. In order to pass the London University Matriculation Examination he went back to school—this time at St. Peter's College—in order to learn Greek. He left for England, and matriculated in June, 1870, and entered at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. I have the authority of the late Luther Holden of osteological fame, who came out to Australia for a trip in the early nineties of last century, for the statement that Verco was the most brilliant student that had studied at Bart's in his time, and that at the end of his academic career in 1877 he knew almost everything that was to be known in every department of medicine and surgery. He certainly was the most distinguished medical graduate during the 'seventies at the University of London, becoming, as he did, scholar in forensic medicine and gold medalist, second in medicine, also with gold medal; gold medalist at the M.D. in 1876, and scholar and gold medalist at the B.S. in 1877. He must have been at the time of his decease about the sixteenth on the roll of Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Amongst other accomplishments he learnt shorthand.

Dr. Verco returned to Australia in the following year and started in general practice in North Adelaide; for the word specialist had not then been invented, nor were medical officers to the hospital distinguished as physicians and surgeons even. The great promise of his student career was amply fulfilled in practice, and before he had been back nine years, and when only 36 years of age, he was chosen as the president of the first medical congress ever held in Australasia. He began to discard the embarrassing items of midwifery and family practice, then of the various special departments, and by 1891 he had settled on North Terrace—the Harley Street of South Australia—as the first purely consulting physician, and the only one for twenty-odd years. Meanwhile he had been associated as honorary medical officer with the Adelaide Children's Hospital, a position he resigned in 1890. He was elected to the staff of the Adelaide Hospital first in 1880 as honorary medical officer; in 1882 he became differentiated as a physician, and this post he held for some thirty years, resuming it again temporarily in 1914, when so many of our men left for the war. The Adelaide University started its medical curriculum in 1885, and in the following year Dr. Verco was appointed joint lecturer (with Dr. J. Davies Thomas) in medicine. On Dr. Thomas's retirement in 1888 on account of ill-health Dr. Verco became sole lecturer, and remained so till 1912. He was dean of the Faculty in 1889 and again in 1921-2. When the British Red Cross Society, wishing to show its gratitude to the Commonwealth for its help and sacrifices, sent out £150,000 to the Governor-General (Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson—now Lord Novar), he consulted Dr. Verco as to the distribution of South Australia's share. Dr. Verco suggested that £15,000 should be devoted to the establishment of a dental hospital, and thereupon the Council of the University established a Faculty and degrees in dental science. He became the first dean of this Faculty, and devoted much time to the organization of the curriculum. Dr. Verco served on the Council of the University as far back as 1895 for seven years, and again from 1919 to 1928. In 1926 he gave £5,000 to the University as an endowment to ensure the continuance of the *Australian Journal of Experimental Biology and Medical Science*, started by the late Professor T. Brailsford Robertson.

In connexion with our Branch of the Association I may mention that he was a foundation member in 1879, and the last of that band to survive. He was president in 1886-7, and during the great war he was again president for nearly its whole duration. His services to the Association were great, and he was instrumental in guarding the interests of those serving abroad during their absence. His portrait in oils was presented to him, and at one time graced the British Medical Hall. He joined, in 1878, the Adelaide Philosophical Society, which soon after was