

formed in May, 1940, he joined up with enthusiasm and was medical officer to the Bridlington battalion, holding the rank of major.

Dr. C. J. Gordon Taylor writes: "C. R.," as he was universally known by his friends, was a practitioner of the best type. He was on the staff of the Lloyd Hospital, Bridlington, for 28 years, and was for many years an active member of the East Riding Panel Committee and, on its formation, of the East Riding Executive Council and the local medical committee, from which he resigned only about a year ago. Always full of energy and bubbling over with fun, he was exceedingly popular with his patients and with his colleagues. He was a keen sportsman, playing cricket, hockey, and tennis in his younger days and enjoying shooting and fishing when the time came to give up the more robust forms of activity. He continued to act as a hockey referee till he was well on in his fifties. When the change-over to the National Health Scheme became imminent in 1948 he decided to retire from practice. He went to live in the country, where he found that all his time and energies had to be given to the care of a lovely garden and a considerable assortment of livestock. His friends often teased him that he had given up one exacting job for one even more strenuous. Some two years ago he underwent a serious operation and, though apparently making a good recovery, found his agricultural activities were too much for him, so he gave them up, and early this year he went to Bourne-mouth, where he hoped at last to be able to live a quiet life. But it was not to be: death claimed him after only a few months. I was closely associated with "C. R." and in daily, and almost hourly, contact with him for a quarter of a century. Through all that time, with its many vicissitudes, not once was an angry or unreasonable word spoken and not once arose cause for bitterness or resentment. "He was my friend, faithful and just to me." If called upon to name "C. R.'s" most outstanding quality, of all the good ones he possessed I would, I think, mention before all his outstanding kindness and generosity. He was indeed the perfect host and enjoyed to the full the stimulating company of the young of both sexes. Dr. Taylor married in 1915 Frances Muriel, daughter of Mr. Frank Peto. To her and their three daughters we offer our profound sympathy.

The members of the Ashton-under-Lyne Division of the British Medical Association heard with regret and with a sense of personal loss of the sudden death while on holiday of Dr. W. K. SPENCER, at the early age of 41 years. In his youth William Kenneth Spencer had suffered from an illness which left him with impaired health. In spite of this he led a very active life. After graduating M.B., Ch.B. from the University of Manchester in 1934 he held a number of house appointments at Oldham Royal Infirmary and he then succeeded to an old-established family practice in Ashton. By his diligence, tact, and kindness he increased the respect and reputation with which the family name had long been held in the town. His death was acutely felt by large numbers of Ashton residents, and the public funeral service was held in a church packed to capacity. For many years Dr. Spencer was treasurer of the Ashton-under-Lyne Division of the British Medical Association, and was a keen and regular attendee at the meetings of the Division. The deepest sympathy of all his friends is extended to his widow. —D. M.

The Services

The *London Gazette* has announced the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel B. L. P. Brosseau, M.C., R.C.A.M.C., as O.B.E. (Military Division) in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in Korea.

The *London Gazette* has announced the award of the R.N.V.R. decoration to the following officers: Surgeon Commanders A. D. Petro and R. W. Carslaw, R.N.V.R., R. F. Matters, R.A.N.V.R., and J. E. Hughes, R.A.N.R.; Surgeon Lieutenant-Commanders S. A. Swanson and I. Martin-Scott, R.N.V.R.

Medico-Legal

STRAFFEN

[FROM OUR MEDICO-LEGAL CORRESPONDENT]

John Thomas Straffen was born on February 27, 1930. On November 30, 1939, he was put on probation for two years at Bath for stealing a purse from a little girl. In June, 1940, after breaking his probation, he was certified under the Education Act, 1921, as a mental defective. He remained in institutions for mental defectives until March 31, 1946, when he was discharged because he had reached the age of 16. He then got a job as an errand boy.

On October 10, 1947, he was tried at Bath Quarter Sessions, and 14 larcenies and two housebreakings all committed during that year were taken into consideration. Two further incidents were disclosed at the trial. On September 12, 1947, in order to spite a girl friend with whom he was displeased, he had wrung the necks of five chickens belonging to her parents. On September 27, 1947, he had assaulted a 13-year-old girl on an allotment, put his hand over her mouth, and said: "What would you do if I killed you? I've done it before." The girl escaped injury.

Arising out of this trial he was certified to be a mental defective, and was removed to the appropriate institution. He twice escaped, and offered violence to the police when they caught him. In April, 1951, he was let out on licence to live with his parents, and got a job in a market garden in Bath.

Murders at Bath

On July 15, 1951, Brenda Goddard, aged 6, was murdered by manual strangulation near Bath. Straffen was seen by the police in the course of their inquiries into this murder on August 3. On August 8, 1951, another little girl, Cicely Batstone, aged 9, was murdered in Bath by manual strangulation.

Next day Straffen was again seen by the police and charged with the murder. From what he told the police and the doctors while he was on remand it appears that he strangled both children with the motive of spiting the police. He was committed for trial to Taunton Assizes.

Where a person committed for trial appears to the prison medical authorities to be insane and they so report, the proper course is for a jury to be empanelled to try the question whether he is sane or not. If he is found insane, and therefore unfit to plead to the indictment, that finding is recorded, and he is ordered to be detained during the Queen's pleasure. The reason is that it is not right to try the criminal responsibility of someone who is so apparently out of his mind that he will not appreciate what the trial is about. When this procedure is followed it is for the prosecution to prove the prisoner's sanity. He is not required to prove, as he is when the defence of insanity is raised at the trial, that he is not criminally responsible for his act because he comes within the M'Naghten Rules and so lacks the necessary intent. In practice the evidence of the prison doctors alone is called, and the verdict and detention during the Queen's pleasure follow as a matter of course.

Sent to Broadmoor

It is not surprising in view of his history that this was the procedure followed when Straffen appeared at the Assizes on October 17, 1951. The only evidence called was that of Dr. Park, the medical officer of Bristol Prison, where Straffen had been detained on remand. In his direction to the jury empanelled to try whether Straffen was fit to plead Mr. Justice Oliver told them that to try him would be like

trying a little child. He was duly found unfit to plead and ordered to be detained in Broadmoor till His Majesty's pleasure be known.

The medical officer at Broadmoor under whose care he came took the view that Straffen was a feeble-minded person. When reporting on his performance at contract bridge in the institution he noted in his record that he played "in a jocular manner."

On April 29, 1952, Straffen escaped from Broadmoor. During the four hours before his recapture a little girl aged 5, Linda Bowyer, was murdered by manual strangulation at Farley Hill, not far from the institution. Straffen was charged with her murder.

Fitness to Plead

When he came to be tried at Winchester Assizes in July no jury was empanelled to try whether he was fit to plead. His counsel put forward the twofold defence that the prosecution (conducted by the Solicitor-General, Mr. G. D. Roberts, Q.C., and Mr. Hutchinson) had not proved that it was Straffen's hand that had murdered Linda Bowyer; or that, if it was, he was insane within the M'Naghten Rules and therefore not criminally responsible for his act. On the first issue evidence that he had committed the murders of the little girls in Bath had been given by the prosecution.

Among the six doctors called to give evidence on the issue of his sanity was the medical officer from Bristol Prison who alone had given evidence at the Taunton trial eight months before. He said that he did not now hold the view that Straffen was unfit to plead. Straffen had profited by his experiences. Dr. Matheson, principal medical officer at Brixton Gaol, said that, though feeble-minded, Straffen would have known the nature and quality of his act. He showed a childish lack of appreciation of his situation. Dr. Murdoch, medical officer at Wandsworth, said that Straffen, though within the category of unstable mental defectives, showed no signs of insanity while on remand in Wandsworth.

He must have recovered from his condition of being unfit to plead between October, 1951, and his escape from Broadmoor on April 29, 1952.

Verdict of Guilty

The jury found Straffen guilty of murder on July 25, 1952. They therefore found on the evidence that was given before them that his seven-months stay in Broadmoor before he managed to escape and immediately strangle another little girl had cured him of the insanity from which he was suffering last October. His appeal, which was fought on questions of the admissibility in evidence of statements made to the police and of the circumstances of the Bath murders, was dismissed by the Court of Criminal Appeal on August 20. On August 27 it was announced that the Attorney-General had refused his fiat for an appeal to the House of Lords and on August 29 that the Home Secretary had recommended a reprieve.

The Two Trials

Let it be conceded that it is in the interest of the community that Straffen should be conclusively prevented from adding to the terrible toll he has taken of little girls in his dislike for the police; it yet remains difficult in the light of the facts to reconcile the course of his first trial with the course of the second. People may well think that this was not one of the clearest examples of the administration of English justice.

In Brazil last month, helped only by a neighbour, Senhor Jose Albano delivered his negro wife of five live girls. These are the third surviving set of quintuplets to be recorded in modern times (*New York Times*, August 21). The quins weighed at birth about 2½ lb. (1.1 kg.) each, and are now in the São Paulo Maternity Hospital. The first girl was born at 4 p.m. and the last 4½ hours later.

Universities and Colleges

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The following have been appointed or nominated for appointment or reappointment as representatives of the University on the governing bodies of the institutions indicated in parentheses: Sir Archibald Gray, Dr. C. F. Harris, and Dr. Andrew Topping (British Postgraduate Medical Federation); Dr. E. R. Boland (General Medical Council); Mr. P. H. Mitchiner and Sir James Paterson Ross (Guy's Hospital Medical School); Dr. M. I. A. Hunter and Mr. Mitchiner (Royal Dental Hospital of London, School of Dental Surgery); Mr. E. G. Slesinger and Professor J. Z. Young, F.R.S. (St. George's Hospital Medical School); Professor W. C. W. Nixon (St. Mary's Hospital Medical School); Professor R. Hare (St. Mary's Hospital Medical School: Inoculation Committee, Wright-Fleming Institute); Mr. J. P. Hedley and Professor E. T. C. Spooner (St. Thomas's Hospital Medical School); Sir Archibald Gray and Dr. Topping (University College Hospital Medical School); Dr. N. A. Thorne (Clapton Park and Upton House secondary schools); Dr. M. Mitman (Charlton G. and Fosdene secondary schools); Dr. T. S. Cochrane (Creek Manor secondary school); Dr. H. C. Squires (Eltham Hill King's Park secondary school).

The following have been recognized as teachers of the University in the subjects indicated in parentheses: *Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine*, Dr. W. d'A. Maycock (Pathology). *Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, Dr. C. G. Barnes (Medicine). *Institute of Dental Surgery*, Dr. V. Goldman (Dental Anaesthetics), Dr. G. J. Parfitt (Dental Surgery, Preventive Dentistry). *Institute of Orthopaedics*, Mr. V. Logue (Surgery), Dr. H. A. Sissons (Pathology). *Institute of Laryngology and Otology*, Mr. A. Radcliffe (Oto-rhino-laryngology). *London Hospital Medical College*, Dr. M. H. Salaman (Pathology). *St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College*, Dr. R. A. Shooter (Pathology).

Mr. J. A. Cholmeley and Mr. K. I. Nissen have been granted probationary recognition for two years as teachers of orthopaedics in the University at the Institute of Orthopaedics and Dr. Phyllis Wade probationary recognition for three years as teacher of radiology (therapy) in the University at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine.

Geoffrey Wingfield Harris, M.D., Sc.D., has been appointed to the FitzMary Chair of Physiology tenable at the Institute of Psychiatry, from October 1.

Frederick Lloyd Warren, D.Sc., F.R.I.C., has been appointed to the Chair of Biochemistry, tenable at London Hospital Medical College, from October 1.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Paul Henderson Davison, M.D., M.R.C.P., has been appointed University Clinical Lecturer in Medicine (*corrected announcement*).

ROYAL FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

Professor Alfred Blalock, surgeon-in-chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital and professor of surgery at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, has been admitted an Honorary Fellow of the Faculty.

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON

At the August meeting of the Court of Assistants of the Society Sir Wilson Jameson was elected Master of the Society, Brigadier E. M. Townsend, Senior Warden, and Dr. H. Seaward Morley, Junior Warden for the ensuing year.

Dr. Frank Howitt was reappointed as the Society's representative on the British Postgraduate Medical Federation. Mr. R. Vernon Lloyd was appointed to the Pharmaceutical Manpower Committee.

The death was reported of Mr. W. T. Withers, late Bedel, who had been in the service of the Society for 60 years.

The diploma of L.M.S.S.A. was granted by examination to the following successful candidates: W. R. Howell, M. D. Ingle, G. C. Grassby, J. D. Le Bouvier, G. L. Shaw, D. G. W. Jenkins, F. G. Christensen, A. P. Pritchard, I. A. W. Scott, H. P. Charles, J. D. Waye, R. E. C. Altounyan, H. O. Boote, P. M. Hardiman, G. G. Davies, D. L. Lewis, R. Morton, M. J. C. Mardel, G. R. N. Woods, L. J. Bishop, K. Morrice, W. E. L. Gordon, E. A. Griffiths, J. K. H. Culverhouse, A. M. Shukri, H. Davies, J. L. Harney, W. A. Jones, T. L. Dormandy.

The following were awarded the Diploma in Industrial Health: N. S. Hepburn, B. E. C. Hopwood, H. J. C. J. L'Etang.