

Obituary

P. H. MITCHINER, C.B., C.B.E., M.D.,
M.S., F.R.C.S.

The death of Mr. Philip Mitchiner at the age of 64, which took place in London on October 15, removes a man of high distinction in the fields of surgery, of academic life, and of military medicine. He will be sorely missed in a number of council chambers and in many other places, not least at St. Thomas's Hospital, to which he gave close upon a quarter of a century of service, and at the Royal College of Surgeons, where he was Hunterian professor as long ago as 1923, and of which he had been for the last two years a vice-president



(Elliott & Fry, London)

and for many years a member of the Court of Examiners. He was a man of soldierly bearing and accustomed to command, but behind the military front were many very human qualities, including a keen sense of humour, and those who came into closer touch with him soon mingled their respect with affection.

Philip Henry Mitchiner was born at Croydon on June 17, 1888, and attended the Reigate Grammar School. From there he

entered St. Thomas's Hospital, where he showed unusual brilliance as a student, winning various scholarships on his way. He qualified M.B., B.S., London, with gold medal, in 1912, and, selecting surgery as his special field, took the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in the following year, and became Master of Surgery the year after that. He held certain residential posts at St. Thomas's, and with the coming of the first world war found himself registrar at the Fifth London General Hospital. That was far too unadventurous for young Mitchiner, and soon he was serving with the Serbian army at Salonika. For his work in that field he was mentioned in dispatches, received the knighthood of St. Sava and the gold medal for devoted service, and from Russia the Order of St. Stanislaus. The end of the war did not terminate his association with Serbia, now part of Yugoslavia, and in 1920-1 he returned to that area as surgeon to the Serbian Relief Fund under the Serbian Government.

Settling again in London in 1922, Mitchiner became surgeon to out-patients at the Royal Northern Hospital, a post he retained until 1926. Soon the opportunity came for appointment on the staff of his old hospital, St. Thomas's, as assistant surgeon; he became full surgeon in 1935, and on his retirement three years ago consulting surgeon, a post which he held at the time of his death. His part in the second world war, although he was over 50 at its outbreak, was as adventurous as in the first. Much of his time was spent as D.D.M.S. at Corps headquarters of the Air Defence of Britain at Stanmore, but in 1940 he was D.D.M.S. of IV Corps in Norway, and later of V Corps. He returned to his anti-aircraft command in 1941, and in 1942 he was appointed major-general and D.D.M.S., Northern Com-

mand. In 1944 until the end of the war he held an appointment as consulting surgeon to the Middle East Forces, where he served as administrative medical officer under Montgomery, Auchinleck, and other great commanders. Early in the war he had found time to produce two manuals, one on the *Modern Treatment of Burns and Scalds* and the other, jointly with Sir Ernest Cowell, on *Medical Organization and Surgical Practice in Air Raids*. These were not his only essays in medical literature, for he was co-author, with Mr. W. H. C. Romanis, of two textbooks which have run through many editions, *Science and Practice of Surgery* and *Surgical Emergencies in Practice*.

Military medicine, and indeed military life in general, were Mitchiner's great love. He began his military career when he was only 16 years of age, as a cadet in the Queen's Volunteers, and he was one of the earliest recruits to the University Officers Training Corps in London when it was formed a few years later. As a medical student he took his first parade in a snowstorm at Millbank in January, 1908. Presently he became sergeant, and the young officer under whom he served was the future Lord Webb-Johnson, under whose presidency in the council of the Royal College of Surgeons he was one day to sit. For many years Mitchiner was officer in charge of the London University Officers Training Corps, and indeed, in a popular reference book, this, with the Territorial Association, is listed as his only recreation. One of the great pleasures in his busy life was to bring cadets to Millbank and initiate them in the routine of barracks, even down to such details as the drawing of pay and rations, the laying out of kit, and the significance of the various bugle calls. Between the wars he worked enthusiastically in the Army Medical Service, and from 1933 to 1935 was A.D.M.S. of the Second London Anti-Aircraft Division, and afterwards of the First. Another interest of his was the Casualties Union, of which he was president—a voluntary body of trained "casualties" to help teachers of first-aid by simulating accidents and acting as realistic casualties.

Along with all this life of action, however, he was a man of acute mind, and his interventions in the several councils and committees on which he served were always very much to the point. In 1951 he was appointed deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, an appointment renewed in the following year. He was also adviser to the Postgraduate Medical Education Committee of the South-west Metropolitan Region, a member of the administrative committee of the War Memorial Fund of the Army Medical Services, and recently, representing his College, he had been made a member of the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

In 1932 he became honorary surgeon to the King. He was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1938, and of the Order of the Bath in 1944. He is survived by his wife, whom he married in 1928.

We are indebted to Sir MAX PAGE for the following appreciation: Philip Mitchiner, by both his writing and his clinical work, established himself as one of that diminishing breed—the general surgeon. His death, at a relatively early age, is a severe loss to the profession, for he was possessed of a robust critical spirit which found expression on many committees, and there often proved a vitalizing factor. A certain brusqueness or occasional unorthodoxy of speech seldom hurt the sensitive, its effect being always mitigated by his transparent honesty of purpose and by the sound horse sense which usually characterized his pronouncements. At St. Thomas's Hospital he was a most popular and successful teacher of undergraduates. In his latter years he did a great deal of examining for various qualifying authorities, and

was reputed to expect a high standard of clear thinking from the candidate, yet to be possessed of sympathy and understanding for the tongue-tied.

He had a strong sense of public duty, and his services to the Royal College of Surgeons and to London University are outstanding examples of this trend. He was a loyal and hard-working member of any organization with which he became associated; his long attachment to the medical Territorial unit of London University was an outstanding example of this side of his character. In the first world war love of enterprise and adventure found a congenial outlet in his service with the Serbian Army. In the last war his experience and rank in the Territorial Army led to his employment on the administrative side until towards the end, when he served as a consultant in the Middle East Command.

On the Council of the College of Surgeons he will be much missed, for he provided a useful link with London University and his occasional trenchant criticism and unflinching common sense at the council board carried great weight. He was an admirable secretary to a College club, both for his managing ability and for the vein of dry wit which illuminated his minutes. Always a willing horse, in the last few years he had had several bouts of ill-health. His spirit was never better shown than by an entire absence of self-pity in relation to these, and by the resilience and determination with which he got back into harness. He was happily married to a most popular sister of St. Thomas's, to whom much sympathy is extended in her early widowhood.

We are indebted to Sir ERNEST COWELL for the following appreciation: In the passing of Philip Mitchiner, not only the Territorial Army but the medical services of the Regular Army have lost a brilliant, wise, and forceful leader. Philip Mitchiner and I had been fellow part-time soldiers ever since the early days of the University of London Officers' Training Corps, when in 1910 we attended the first camp together. We enjoyed the valuable experience of learning to live under active service conditions, sleeping eight in a tent in wet weather. As N.C.O.s we learned the details of internal administration and enjoyed the privileges of the sergeants' mess. In the 1914-18 war Mitchiner volunteered for service with the Serbian Army, where he did good work and was suitably decorated. He served in many theatres, notably in Salonika, being engaged mostly in administrative and staff duties. In the interval between wars he served in the University of London O.T.C., commanding the unit for a number of years and always finding time for soldiering in spite of extensive hospital commitments and increasing private practice. In 1938 we co-operated in producing a manual of practice for what we both felt to be the impending war: the book, *Medical Organization and Surgical Practice in Air Raids*, was well received and I believe was helpful to many engaged in organizing civil defence and operating as war surgeons.

The last war found Mitchiner still serving, and when V Corps was formed he was appointed D.D.M.S.; this carried the rank of brigadier. All the staff officers of Corps Headquarters were expected to be physically fit and were required to do long-distance runs at least twice a week. At about this time cardiac symptoms began to appear and he was advised to take things easily. In the ill-fated expedition to Norway Mitchiner was the D.D.M.S. and passed through an anxious time. He told me one day how he was going along a road when there was considerable shelling. He added: "My doctors had told me not to hurry, and so I acquired a great reputation for bravery." On his return from Norway he was appointed D.D.M.S. Anti-Aircraft Command, where he established and administered an extensive and difficult medical service. In 1942 he was promoted to the rank of major-general, thus being the first T.A. officer to hold such high rank in the second world war and following Major-General Sir Richard Luce of the first world war. In 1943 Mitchiner was posted as D.D.M.S. Northern Command, again making history for the T.A.: no Territorial medical officer had ever occupied this post be-

fore—always regarded as one of the plums of the Service. On leaving Northern Command he carried out the duties of consulting surgeon in the Middle East. Up to the time of his death he was acting as adviser on T.A. matters to the Director-General of Army Medical Services.

Mitchiner's interest in the R.A.M.C. remained to the end, in spite of increasing demands entailed by such offices as the Vice-President of the Royal College of Surgeons. He attended the annual T.A. Challenge Shield Competition in September and was present at the meeting of the Auxiliary R.A.M.C. Funds Committee on October 6. Philip Mitchiner's name will long be honoured by hundreds of officers and other ranks of the R.A.M.C.(T.A.). His facile pen and ready wit, his self-sacrificing enthusiasm, and his wise counsel provided a rare combination of qualities. I would like to express the sympathy of all his friends to his widow, whose devoted care contributed so much to his success in life.

W. E. GYE, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.

Dr. W. E. Gye, director of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund from 1936 to 1949, died in Perth, Western Australia, on October 14, aged 68 years.

William Ewart Bullock—who later changed his surname to Gye, the maiden name of his first wife—was born on August 11, 1884, at the small Derbyshire village of Breaston. His father was a signalman on the Midland Railway, who, like many another, found difficulty in keeping a largish family adequately clothed and fed. The economic struggle must have been particularly severe at times, for Gye once mentioned his vivid memory of the sense of dire calamity which in his early childhood hung over the household for some days following his accidental loss of a single sixpenny-piece from his mother's housekeeping money. His schooling was local, and at the end of it he had to begin earning a living. He tried several of the available occupations without finding one likely to prove lastingly satisfactory, and he then became



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a "pupil teacher" and fortunately came under the tutorial care and personal influence of Samuel Clegg, who had exceptionally strong enthusiasms for the literary and artistic side of human activities. Gye's lasting love of poetry and his keen appreciation of literary style had its real beginnings in these days.

His training period over, Gye gave up teaching to become a clerk on the Midland Railway. He was able to continue his study of science, and on the advice of Mr. Clegg he sat an examination for a scholarship tenable at University College, Nottingham, and was successful. His progress was unusually rapid, and in due course he gained his London B.Sc. in chemistry. In his student days also Gye had become a good cricketer, probably up to county standard, and in later years he greatly enjoyed watching test matches and other important games. At Nottingham Gye became very friendly with D. H. Lawrence, at that time a fellow student: they seemed to have found much of interest in one another.

After taking his degree Gye spent a year in Birmingham teaching, and then in 1909 he accepted the offer of

a friend—a second friend seems also to have helped to some extent later—of funds to enable him to study medicine. The offer was intended as a gift, but Gye lived cheaply and later insisted in regarding the money as a loan, and paid it back in full. After an unusually brilliant course in Edinburgh Gye graduated M.B., Ch.B. in 1912, coming out top in the final examination, and then after a month or two as an assistant in general practice he returned to the university, and in 1913 proceeded M.D. with the award of a Gold Medal. He then joined the staff of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, at that time in Queen Square, London. Here he met as colleagues Bashford, Murray, and Russell, and became expert in the histological interpretation of cancer sections. This period was important in his life in that it laid the foundations for the work to which he was to dedicate himself a few years later. When the first world war broke out Gye joined the R.A.M.C. and served in France and then in Italy in charge of a field ambulance.

He returned to London on demobilization and joined the scientific staff of the National Institute for Medical Research, Hampstead, then coming into being. After making some original and important observations on "defence rupture" in anaerobic infections in collaboration with W. Cramer, Gye became interested in silicosis. He collaborated with E. H. Kettle in investigations of silicosis and miners' phthisis. Gye appears to have had a hand in the initiation of the dog-distemper investigations conducted by the Medical Research Council. However, since the experimental work on this virus disease had to wait until a colony of distemper-free dogs was established, Gye occupied himself in preliminary studies of another filterable virus. He obtained the Rous fowl sarcoma and was so deeply immersed in the fowl tumour problem when active work on distemper virus was ready to proceed that arrangements were made to permit him to proceed with the tumour work.

Gye continued his investigations of fowl tumours, and in 1925 aroused much controversy by the publication of a paper in which he claimed that not only fowl tumours but other cancers were due to viruses which could be cultivated in cell-free media and photographed by ultra-violet photomicrography. Much further work was carried out in collaboration with W. J. Purdy, and in 1931 Gye and Purdy presented their work on fowl tumours in detail in a book *The Cause of Cancer*. The central idea in the thesis presented in this work is that the specificity of various growths is determined by a "specific host" factor, not by the properties of the virus.

There were differences of opinion about some of Gye's work and the validity of his conclusions, but he continued to make valuable, if controversial, contributions to cancer research. To-day it seems generally conceded that his chief contribution in the early period was that he did not allow the filterable fowl tumours to be set aside as unique conditions of no significance to the cancer problem. He continued to keep the virus hypothesis an active issue. In the same issue of this *Journal* (March 26, 1949), in which was printed a lecture he delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons entitled "The Propagation of Mouse Tumours by Means of Dried Tissue," we published a leading article in which his latest work was discussed. The following quotation is relevant:

The core of the whole argument is this: are the filterable tumours things apart, or are they essentially the same as other tumours, differing only in some quantitative manner, so that our techniques just fail (as they sometimes fail even

with fowl tumours) to reveal a continuing cause, separable from the living cell?

Gye concluded in his lecture that certain mouse sarcomata had such a continuing cause and that it was probably viral in nature. This conclusion did not find general acceptance, but has stimulated research in this country and abroad which has yielded much additional information on the ability of tumour cells to withstand prolonged freezing or dehydration.

In 1936 Gye became director of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, and he took a full advisory share in the designing and building of the new laboratories at Mill Hill. In 1938 he was elected F.R.S., and in 1947 he was appointed Professor of Experimental Pathology at the Royal College of Surgeons. He retired in 1949, having been in failing health for some time.

Gye was twice married. In 1913 he married Miss Elsa Gye, who died in 1943. In 1948 he married Professor Ida Mann, and a year later he went with her to Western Australia. His health continued poor until his death. Our sympathies are offered to Professor Ida Mann and the three sons of the first marriage, all of whom survive him.

We are indebted to Dr. W. J. PURDY for the following appreciation: Among the leaders in pathology, especially in experimental pathology, in this country, in the period immediately following the first world war, was a notable group of men closely held together by personal contacts and friendships arising from a particular type of scientific outlook and preoccupation. Among these workers were those who founded the *British Journal of Experimental Pathology*, and most, or all, were influential members of the Medical Research Club. To-day only a very few of this once familiar group are left. Kettle, MacIntosh, Murray, Bullock, Topley, Almoth Wright, and others are gone. Now Gye is gone, and with his death there is a vivid sense of loss.

When Gye started his cancer investigations research workers had apparently reached a complete but triumphal impasse in their search for the cancer cause. There was a universal agreement that cancer qualities certainly depended on some subtle feature in which cancerous cells differed from normal cells—some mutation, for instance—and must therefore involve "life processes" themselves, intimate knowledge of which must for ever remain beyond our reach. That was the situation about 1914, and with the conclusion Gye, at that time, agreed, but at the same time he saw how completely this conclusion was responsible for the existing lack of drive and initiative being displayed by cancer research workers in this aspect of their work.

Presently, however, and particularly during his period of war service, Gye pondered much over the likely significance of the filterable fowl cancers which Rous had recently discovered and investigated, but which already were being so readily and conveniently dismissed and ignored as spurious. To Gye it seemed that here was a cancer agent conveniently exposed to investigation, and after he had joined the staff of the M.R.C., and in face of much well-informed opposition, he determined on an attempt to follow up the work of Rous from the point at which Rous had abandoned it. After a time Gye discovered that the essential active agent in a Rous filtrate contains two significant factors. One of these, he showed, is a product of the cancerous cell itself, and the bearer of that remarkable cell specificity which is exhibited by filtrates and differs strictly according to the kind of cancer from which it is derived. The other factor, Gye showed, has all the qualities of a parasitic virus, but does not differ with the kind of tumour from which it is derived, being of only one variety or perhaps very few varieties. It seems to me that the factor which is the product of the cell must be considered Gye's key discovery. What part it plays in the economy of the cancer cell he did not know, but its recognition enabled him to investigate the accompanying virus. Gye conceived of the virus as stimu-

lating its host-cell to malignant activities and to be the true cause of cancer growth in a medical sense. Thus Gye's findings showed that the theoretical arguments on which the prevalent views had been based were invalid, and that no real impasse had been reached at all. As a further consequence of his work welcome conflict, enthusiasm, and vitality returned to cancer research.

Perhaps Gye's outstanding qualities were his absolute scientific honesty, his treatment of junior colleagues as friends in so far as they wished it, his willingness to fight with superiors over what he thought should be done; his efforts to give his qualified and technical assistants justice and friendship and ready help from his vast store of knowledge; his courage and self-reliance in face of opposition in scientific judgments; his loyalty to superiors; and his habit of attacking theories and conclusions with vigour, but never the holders of those opinions. The publicity given to him and his work in the public press was certainly not of his contriving; indeed, on various grounds he much regretted it, right from the beginning. Curiosity was the force that drove him most strongly. Once Captain S. R. Douglas, his departmental chief at the time, warningly remarked that someone else was working on similar lines and might publish first. Gye's reply was, "Well, what does that matter? If he does I shall then have my answer and can pass on without further work"—a remark typical of the man, and without any trace of jealousy.

A. E. GOW, M.D., F.R.C.P.

We are indebted to Dr. M. H. GORDON for the following appreciation of the late Dr. A. E. Gow, whose death was recorded in the *Journal* of October 4 (p. 781):

Dr. A. E. Gow had personal qualities that endeared him to all who knew him. He was one of that rare class—a highly skilled clinical pathologist who ultimately became senior physician to his hospital. When the new pathological building at St. Bartholomew's was opened in 1909 under Sir Frederick Andrewes, Gow was one of the junior demonstrators, and as he had recently been house-physician to Dr. (now Lord) Horder at the Great Northern Hospital he was always an adept at blood culture, blood counting, and all the increasing applications of bacteriology and serology in the service of clinical diagnosis. In 1932, when the report of the combined effort to define the causal agent of Hodgkin's disease—known as the Rose Research—was published, a stage had been reached when all other pathogenic organisms had been excluded, excepting the elementary bodies, or E.B.s, similar in appearance to those present in vaccinia and smallpox and known to be bodies of the actual virus. In order to test the significance of these "Hodgkin bodies" it was necessary to try the effect of a heated suspension or vaccine of them on a case of Hodgkin's disease. Gow carried this out with great care and skill, with the result that convincing evidence was found of the existence of a specific hypersensitivity to these E.B.s in patients affected by Hodgkin's disease (see *Proc. roy. Soc. Med.*, 1934, 27, 1035). This was a great step forward, and prepared the way for the next stage when Dr. E. C. Warner showed that this specific allergy to the Hodgkin E.B.s could be overcome by combining them with their specific antibodies before injection.

Dr. ROBERT ELRICK MARWICK, who died in Edinburgh on August 9, was born in Kirkcaldy in 1881, and was educated in Edinburgh, where he graduated M.B., Ch.B. at the university in 1906. He practised at Cockburnspath, Berwickshire, for a short time, and then in London, after which he joined, and later succeeded, Dr. McLachlan at Longtown, Cumberland. His work was interrupted by the first world war, during which he served in France in the R.A.M.C. Later he returned to Longtown, and afterwards was in practice at Liberton, Edinburgh. From 1943 until the end of July, 1952, he held an appointment in the Edinburgh office of the Ministry of Pensions. Dr. Marwick was one

of the first doctors to arrive at the scene of the great troop-train disaster at Gretna in May, 1915, and he did valuable first-aid work. His personality was a stimulant to his patients and to all who came in contact with him. He is survived by his wife and one married daughter.—R. W. B.

Medical Notes in Parliament

EXPERIMENTS ON ANIMALS

LORD DOWDING opened a debate in the House of Lords on October 14 by drawing attention to the unnecessary suffering caused to animals by medical and surgical experiments. He said that even if it could be proved that human beings benefited from the suffering of animals its infliction could be unethical and wrong. There was neither adequate inspection under the 1876 Act on cruelty to animals, nor proper enforcement. The number of experiments was grossly excessive, and they were unduly repetitive. Most of the experiments were impractical when it came to applying them to human maladies, and they might be definitely injurious. He claimed that the volume of criticism from doctors and medical journals was steadily growing, and he demanded an inquiry into the conditions which had arisen since the last Royal Commission reported in 1912, particularly the new field of animal exploitation in the manufacture and testing of drugs.

LORD WEBB-JOHNSON spoke of his experience when President of the Royal College of Surgeons. He said he had refused to sign many applications for such experiments, either because the experimenter was not working under satisfactory conditions, or because the experiment had been repeated a sufficient number of times to prove the results.

More precautions were taken in this country than anywhere else in the world. The suggestion that experimental workers were indifferent to the suffering of the animals was far from the truth.

Dramatic facts had been brought to light by such experiments. One was the placing of an artificial valve in the aorta, which had proved that an incompetent aortic valve could be replaced by a plastic valve. He had seen a dog which had been so operated on eight months before being raced round the track belonging to the laboratories. The only difference he could see from a normal dog was that instead of the normal beat there was the click of the artificial valve. These things were worth doing, and human lives were saved by them.

Adequate Precautions

For the Government, the EARL OF SELKIRK, Lord-in-Waiting, said the number of experiments had considerably increased, but almost all consisted in inoculations, applications of substances, or the administration of a drug. He described the system of inspection, the reports to the chief inspector, and the annual report to Parliament, and said the chief inspector assured him that he knew what was going on in every place on his register. It was true there had been no prosecutions under the 1876 Act, but that was not a satisfactory way of judging its operation. Certificates and licences had been refused, warnings had been issued, and in some cases matters had been brought to the notice of heads of departments, or senior officers of the universities. After careful investigation in 1948 the then Home Secretary had decided there was no need for a new Royal Commission, and nothing had arisen recently to cause the present Home Secretary to alter that decision.

Lord DOWDING withdrew his motion.

Road Accidents

In the House of Lords on October 15 Lord HAMPTON called attention to the continuing tragedy of road accidents. He said that the statistics of road casualties did not show a great improvement during the post-war years. In 1938 the population exposed to risk was 46,208,000. This