

OBITUARY

JOHN WILLIAM STRUTHERS, LL.D., M.B., F.R.C.S.E.

By the death of Mr Struthers at the age of 79, after several years of feeble health, Edinburgh has lost another of her prominent retired surgeons. A son of Sir John Struthers, Professor of Anatomy in Aberdeen University and later a President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, he was educated at Loretto, graduated M.B., Ch.B. at Edinburgh University in 1897, was house physician to Dr Byrom Bramwell and house surgeon at Leith Hospital to Mr Alexander Miles, and in 1899 became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. Elected assistant surgeon to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary in 1908 and surgeon in 1924, he retired in 1939, but during the war for a considerable time had again charge of wards. His value to the University as a Member of Faculty and of the Senatus was recognised by the degree of LL.D. being conferred upon him in 1946. The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh owed much to his devoted interest. He was secretary and treasurer from 1927 to 1941, carrying out many valuable improvements in the hall and library of the College; President in 1941 and 1942; and for eight years he was conservator of the museum.

His contributions to medical literature included a small book, published in 1906, on *Local Anæsthesia in General Surgery*; very important original work, along with the late Dr J. W. Dawson, on osteitis fibrosa; and, with Dr H. E. Seiler, an extensive survey of the hospital accommodation in South-east Scotland, on behalf of the Department of Health, in preparation for the National Health Service.

Partly, perhaps, because of his wide general culture, Struthers possessed exceptional judgment, which was obvious in his surgery and teaching, and an important factor in their value. Allied to this was his faculty of organisation. In the first world war, after service with the Red Cross at Rouen, he was major in charge of the surgical division of the 42nd General Hospital of 1600 beds which was established at Salonica. In the latter the present writer worked under him for a short time, and was filled with admiration for the manner in which in a few days, in unaccustomed circumstances, he organised his department so that it was a pattern for the rest of the hospital. Another rare and enviable gift which Struthers possessed was that of pointing out faults to those for whose work, medical or non-medical, he was responsible, and, if necessary, reprimanding, but in such an impersonal way that no bitterness or ill-feeling was left, but only increased respect.

Struthers had a dry humour, which might flash out effectually at professional meetings, and which made him invaluable at social gatherings. In his earlier years he was a really good golfer, and he continued to take a genuine interest in all varieties of sport.

His unusual but attractive personality gave him a wide circle of friends, who visited him in his retirement and regarded him with real affection. In his later years of feeble health he was fortunate in the devoted care and skilled nursing of his wife, who has earned the admiration, and now the sincere sympathy, of all who knew him.