

Foreign Letters

LONDON

(From Our Regular Correspondent)

Feb. 24, 1925.

Sir Clifford Allbutt

The sudden death, at the age of 88, of the Right Hon. Sir Clifford Allbutt, P.C., K.C.B., F.R.S., regius professor of physic in the University of Cambridge, removes the leader of the medical profession in this country and one whose position was unique in the medical world. Great physician, great scholar, great teacher and great writer, he can be compared in his own generation only with Osler; but in his finished literary style he surpassed the latter, as he did every one else. In an address delivered at the recent coming of age of the University of Leeds, Sir Berkeley Moynihan—himself remarkable for his mastery of English—paid this apt tribute: "Sir Clifford Allbutt, the most deeply learned physician of this day, master of a style of English which for sheer beauty and majesty is perhaps unmatched by that of any other scientific author of our generation; an orator whose speech makes time seem hasty; a cultured upright English gentleman, is the pride of the school he served so long and well."

The son of a Suffolk clergyman, he was born at Dewsbury in Yorkshire. In 1856 he entered Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, gaining a classical scholarship, and he graduated from there in the first class of the natural science tripos. He studied medicine at St. George's Hospital, London, and subsequently in Paris. He graduated with the degree of M.B. at Cambridge in 1861, M.A. in 1867 and M.D. in 1869. In 1864 he was appointed assistant physician to the Leeds General Infirmary, and two years later lecturer in anatomy. His first important work was the introduction of the clinical thermometer into general use. The first clinical thermometers were too cumbersome for general practice. He devised a new form to be carried in a portable case. Next came his pioneer work in establishing the value of the ophthalmoscope in medical diagnosis. His views on this subject were embodied in a book entitled "The Use of the Ophthalmoscope in Diseases of the Nervous System and of the Kidneys and also in Certain General Disorders," which he dedicated to Hughlings Jackson, from whom he had received his first ideas of the probable value of the instrument in the diagnosis of cerebral disease. This epoch making work was published in 1871. In the same year he read an important paper before the Royal Society on the "Effect of Exercise on the Bodily Temperature." In 1880, for his original work in clinical medicine, the society bestowed on him the highest scientific honor of this country—the F.R.S. In 1884 he delivered before the Royal College of Physicians the Goulstonian Lectures on the Neuroses of the Viscera—an important contribution to a subject that was only beginning to be understood. He published many other valuable papers, one in conjunction with his surgical colleague, Mr. Pridgin Teale, on the "Treatment of Scrofulous Neck," in which operation was recommended instead of the older expectant treatment. In 1892 he was appointed regius professor of medicine in the University of Cambridge. In 1896 appeared the first volume of his great "System of Medicine," which was written by many authors and for years was the most authoritative work in the language. He contributed many of the articles himself—on grain and mushroom poisoning, opium and other intoxications, mountain sickness, chlorosis, neuroses of the stomach, dilatation of the stomach, scrofula, functional disease of the heart, overstress of the heart, diseases of the aortic area of the heart, adiposis dolorosa, senile paraplegia, and neurasthenia. In 1905 a second edition was published in collabora-

tion with Dr. Rolleston. Disorders of the circulation particularly attracted his attention. He pointed out that blood pressure tends to rise in men who have laid aside athletic habits and continue to indulge in abundance of food. He introduced the term "senile plethora" or "hyperpiesia" to describe the rise of blood pressure that occurs in otherwise healthy persons after middle life.

In 1915 appeared his great work on "Diseases of the Arteries and Angina Pectoris." His theory that angina pectoris is due to disease of the root of the aorta was not received with much favor at first, but it has steadily gained adherents. His scholarship and great knowledge of medical history are shown in such works as "Science and Medieval Thought" (1901), "The Historical Relations of Medicine and Surgery to the End of the Sixteenth Century" (1905), and "Lectures on Greek Medicine in Rome" (1921). As regius professor he had to read many theses, and while he found the matter good he was vexed by the prevailing defect of writing, which he described as "not mere inelegance" but "such as to perplex and even travesty, or hide the author's meaning." He therefore wrote his classical "Notes on the Composition of Scientific Papers," which every one who would write a medical or scientific article should read and assimilate. All the faults such writers are prone to commit are carefully exposed. Indeed, the book is striking evidence of his zeal in education. Here a master of the most elegant English descended to the task of teaching ordinary students how to write. He strongly held that good diction and literary style were as desirable in science as in literature. Another subject very near his heart was comparative pathology, of which he deplored the neglect. As a result of his appeals, an institute devoted to this subject was recently established at Cambridge. When a section of comparative pathology was recently formed at the Royal Society of Medicine, he was most appropriately made its first president. Except for deafness, age seemed not to affect his faculties; his subtle intellect was keen to the end of his long life. In the number of the *Lancet* containing his obituary is a letter from him on "Alkalis in Certain Diseases of the Skin," evoked by a recent article in that journal. Only a few weeks ago he joined in the *Times* in the renewed crusade against white bread. Though a keen critic of any doctrine brought forward, he was in his personal relations one of the kindest of men, without a trace of that arrogance which successful engenders in lesser minds. His courtesy was unfailing to all, high and low, and, like his other qualities, a finished product.

A Memorial to Mackenzie

When Sir James Mackenzie originated the St. Andrews Institute for Clinical Research, he expressed the hope that it would become permanent and serve as a center for the promotion of his ideas regarding the future development of medicine. After five years of strenuous endeavor, the institute has suffered a severe loss through his death, but his work is being continued and no effort is being spared to give effect to the aims he had in view. The institute is now well organized, and the scheme, which has had a profound influence on medical thought and practice in this country, in America and on the continent, has reached a stage at which important practical results are being obtained. Through the efforts of Sir James Mackenzie, the building, together with well equipped chemical and bacteriologic laboratories, is the property of the council, but the performance of the scheme can be assured only when funds have been accumulated sufficient to meet annual expenditure. Heretofore, the expenses have been met by contributions from Sir James Mackenzie and from his personal friends, while grants for special purposes have been made by the Carnegie Trust and the Medical Research Council.

The council of the institute now finds a wider appeal necessary, if Mackenzie's hopes are to be realized and the fruits of his genius are to be preserved. It suggests that there could be no more fitting tribute to his life and work than the placing of his own institute on a sound financial basis. With this object, the council has resolved to associate the name of the founder with the institute, which will henceforth be known as the James Mackenzie Institute for Clinical Research, St. Andrew's, and to issue an urgent appeal for funds. It has been ascertained that a sum of about \$300,000 will be required to produce the minimum income necessary for the scheme, and of this amount \$35,000 has already been collected. Donations toward securing the establishment of the institute as a permanent memorial of its founder will be received and acknowledged by the honorary treasurer, Commercial Bank, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland.

International Congress of Radiology

The Electro-Therapeutic Section of the Royal Society of Medicine, the Roentgen Society and the British Institute of Radiology have made arrangements for a Congress of Radiology in London, July 1-4. Radiologists from all countries are invited. It is hoped to form a comprehensive international committee and establish a full international congress at regular intervals, meeting in different countries. All papers to be read should be sent to the secretary-general at the British Institute of Radiology, 32 Welbeck Street, London, W., not later than May 1, accompanied by a short abstract. It is important that, whenever possible, papers should be approved by a recognized society of which the author is a member. There will be an exhibition of radiologic and electrical apparatus and of roentgenograms. Radiologic and electrotherapeutic societies are invited to send representatives who shall be eligible to serve on the international committee. The fee for membership in the congress is \$10.

The Cancer Campaign

Sir John Bland-Sutton, president of the Royal College of Surgeons, presided at the quarterly meeting of the Grand Council of the British Empire Cancer Campaign. It was reported that, through the courtesy of the British Advisory Board on Medical Missions of the Conference of Missionary Societies, a world-wide questionnaire on the incidence of cancer was being circulated to 1,100 medical missionaries throughout the world. The questionnaire had been prepared by the intelligence committee, with the assistance of Dr. Major Greenwood, statistical officer to the ministry of health. It was hoped that valuable data might thereby be obtained concerning the incidence of cancer at many outposts of civilization throughout the world. The council confirmed the final arrangements for the administration of the radium recently bought by the campaign and for all matters dealing with radiology as applied to cancer. This will include the control of the central radium emanation depot, now being set up with the financial aid of the campaign at the Middlesex Hospital, and the radium allocated for research at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, St. Peter's Hospital for Urinary Diseases, and the Cancer Research Committee of the London Association of the Medical Women's Federation. In furtherance of the objects of the campaign to keep in the closest touch with cancer research work in different parts of the world, Dr. Duncan Graham of Toronto and Dr. James Ewing of New York were invited to become the campaign's representatives and correspondents in Canada and the United States.

Edward Emanuel Klein

Edward Emanuel Klein, F.R.S., the pioneer of histology and a bacteriologist, has died at Hove in his eighty-first year. Born at Ersec and educated in Vienna, he early

showed an aptitude for histology. When only 24, he attained the position of professor and had published an important work on the muscles of the esophagus. In 1871, the founder of our system of public health in this country, Sir John Simon, then principal medical officer of the local government board, asked Klein to carry out some bacteriologic investigations. This led to a permanent appointment. He carried out for the board a series of valuable researches into the infective processes of the principal infectious diseases, and greatly extended the knowledge of them. The life of pathogenic microbes in water, diphtheria prophylaxis, oyster culture and disease, epidemic diarrhea, typhoid, small-pox and cholera were among the subjects on which his researches threw much light. Soon after coming to this country, he was appointed assistant lecturer on anatomy and physiology at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School, and later became director of the bacteriologic department. In 1873 he was appointed associate editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopic Science*. In 1879 appeared his "Atlas of Histology," which became a standard textbook. His "Introduction to the Study of Specific Micro-Organisms" was published five years later, and his "Elements of Histology," which followed, achieved a similar position.

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The Control of Private Laboratories

The number of private laboratories is increasing daily. Laboratory tests have become such a necessary part of modern medical practice that physicians would not know how to get along without them, and will never complain that too many private laboratories are being placed at their disposal. Nevertheless, they are entitled to demand that the results furnished by these laboratories shall be accurate. In a communication recently presented to the Academy of Medicine, M. C. Regaud proposes the adoption of an official diploma to be granted, on examination, to the directors of laboratories, whereas at present there is no attempt at official control. M. Léon Bernard also has stated that the creation of such a special diploma would obviate, in a great measure, the dangers resulting from incompetence on the part of laboratory directors, but would not wholly prevent the disadvantages arising from a bad organization of the laboratories. He holds, therefore, that an effective system of inspection would be the best means of securing dependable laboratory findings.

After-Effects on the Respiratory Organs of Intoxications by War Gases

The sequels of intoxications by war gases were the subject of a recent interesting study by Prof. E. Sergent of the Ecole d'application du service de santé at Val-de-Grâce (Paris). Of the enduring changes in the organism brought about by war gases, the effects on the respiratory organs are the most frequent. They may constitute a state of chronic and incurable disease of the respiratory apparatus, which must be carefully distinguished from chronic tuberculosis. The sequels of toxic gases of the type of hydrocyanic acid, which are rapidly fatal, are nil, and the sequels of irritating gases are negligible. It is the gases of the vesicant type, for example, yperite (mustard gas), that most frequently produce permanent or lasting effects on the respiratory organs. This is due to the fact that these gases have been more widely used than the others. In reality, the suffocating gases (chlorin-gases) are much more injurious. Instead of their action being confined to the bronchi, as is the case with the vesicating gases, they penetrate to the alveoli and have a still greater tendency to leave sequels. The pathogenesis of after-effects on the respiratory tract has not as yet been