

## OBITUARY



HUBERT WYERS

Dr. Hubert Wyers died at Rush Green Hospital, Romford, Essex, on December 12, 1956. By his untimely passing, at the comparatively early age of 56, industrial medicine has lost a fine physician and a devoted protagonist.

On leaving school he followed his father's occupation, engineering. It was not until his early twenties that he entered the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University where he read classics and philosophy. These studies influenced his whole life and were reflected in all his writings and lectures. On the removal of the family to the west of Scotland he transferred to the University of Glasgow. Here he graduated in Arts in 1927 and in Medicine in 1929. Following house appointments at hospitals in Glasgow he became an assistant in general practice in London, and from there he settled in general practice in Essex. He quickly became a very busy and highly esteemed family doctor. In due course he undertook part-time visiting appointments at several local factories. Following an operation for a perforated gastric ulcer May and Baker Limited offered him the opportunity to give more of his time to the medical service at their factory in Dagenham. Ultimately he decided to give up general practice so that he could devote his whole time to medicine in industry. His

principal appointments were with May and Baker Limited, Murex, and the Cape Asbestos Company Limited.

Thus in his work he was confronted by the numerous and varied medical hazards of the fine chemicals, metallurgical, and asbestos industries. To all the emerging problems he brought a wide and mature experience, which was enhanced by careful observation, accurate recording, and shrewd judgment. He made important contributions to knowledge of poisoning by vanadium, cadmium, and methyl bromide. Skin diseases in industry were his special interest and until his death he was a clinical assistant in the Skin Department at Oldchurch Hospital. In 1947 he was awarded the degree of M.D. by Glasgow University with commendation for his thesis on "Asbestosis" and in 1948 he obtained the Diploma in Industrial Health of the Conjoint Examining Board in England, for which diploma he was later appointed examiner.

He was an enthusiastic member of the Association of Industrial Medical Officers, serving as member of Council and chairman of the London Group. He was editor of the *Transactions* of the Association from the formation of that journal in 1951 until his death. An honour which gave him particular satisfaction was his election as chairman of the South Essex division of the British Medical Association. He was one of the original four founder members of the Thackrah Club.

Despite his many appointments and other professional activities he found time to be a skilled beekeeper, including the preparation of mead, a keen gardener, and an expert collector of early Roman coins. And all through his life he never relaxed his interest in the classics and philosophy. Perhaps it was these studies which, about two years before his death, influenced him to become a convert to Roman Catholicism. In the Church and its priests he discovered deep kinship and consolation.

Hubert Wyers was a wise physician with a deep reverence for life. With Terence he could sincerely affirm: "homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto." This was his concept of the physician in industry:

"He should be a man of wide culture, versed in history and customs of the race and in the laws of thought. Above all, he should have a flame burning in his heart for the sick man. To use a phrase of G. K. Chesterton, he should not be able to see the mob for the men."

He was no ascetic; for him there was no greater pleasure than the company of good companions enjoying fine English food graced by what he would call "the old Falernian". We shall remember him in the words of Horace: "integer vitae, scelerisque purus."

He is survived by his wife and his mother.

A. MEIKLEJOHN



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