

J. E. P. SHERA, M.D., L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S.Irel.,

Medical Superintendent, County Mental Hospital, Wells, Somerset.
Ordinary Member since 1900.

Nestling at the foot of the Mendips, in Somerset, is the cathedral city of Wells, one of the beauty spots of England.

On the eastern outskirts of the city, surrounded by a high stone wall, lives a community of 800 sufferers from all kinds of mental disability. Here, housed in an architecturally interesting domestic Tudor building, mostly built by Gilbert Scott, and situated in beautifully laid-out grounds, are the patients of Eastern Somerset and the City of Bath.

For twenty-one years John Edgar Percival Shera lived among these folk, first as Senior Medical Officer and for the last seven as Medical Superintendent. On March 24, 1926, he met his end with the calm courage which questions nothing and complains of nothing.

He was born at Coothill, co. Cavan, on April 16, 1873, and received his medical education at Trinity College and the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin, qualifying L.R.C.P.&S. Ireland in 1895. In 1903 he took the degree of M.D.Brux. He was house physician for a year at the Richmond Hospital, Dublin, and afterwards went to sea for a year. For eighteen months he was in general practice in London, but gave this up "as he had not the heart to charge poor people."

His first mental appointment was that of Assistant Medical Officer to the Norfolk County Mental Hospital, where he stayed from July, 1899, to December, 1900. From December, 1900, to April, 1905, he was Assistant Medical Officer at the Kent Mental Hospital, Charthamdown. In April, 1905, he became Senior Assistant Medical Officer of Wells Mental Hospital, where, with the exception of his war service, he lived till his death.

His war service was: R.A.M.C., Salonica, December 11, 1916, to September 6, 1918; Murmansk (Russia), November 17, 1918, to August 1, 1919.

The above is the plain record of a man whose dominant characteristic was his sense of duty. The writer knew him intimately for fifteen years, and does not remember a man so dependable, loyal, uncomplaining and methodical among those who were his colleagues for 28 years of official life. His regularity, steadiness of habits, moderation in all things, coupled with a certain dignified silence, made him respected by all who had any relations with him. His high example and devotion to duty made him a very valuable officer—"men might come, and men might go," but Shera could always be relied on.

His various duties were always well and punctually attended to. This in spite of periodic ill-health, for he developed gastric trouble some years ago, but operative measures seemed to give him ease and relief, in so much that during the extremes of climate from Salonica to Russia he never was a day off duty from illness. In 1924 he again had grave symptoms and underwent a second operation, but seems steadily to have grown worse.

He was a strict disciplinarian, but ruled by the strength of his fine example. At Wells his loss will be keenly felt. In a community dependent on one another more than in the outside world, he had shared their joys and sorrows for so many years that his name will for long be on their lips, and deservedly.

Shera was fortunate in having a committee at Wells of kindly, understanding gentlemen, who gave him their complete confidence and respect. As far as possible everything in the way of rest and holiday was granted him, and he was greatly touched by their kindness.

He was, like most Irishmen, a lover of animals and sport. He played cricket, and was an obstinate, straight bat. At golf his handicap was round about 10, and he drove a very long ball and played a good deal.

He has passed away at a comparatively early age—he was only 53. He married in August, 1920, Lillie, elder daughter of Major Stephen Neary, of the Essex Regiment, who survives him. His mother also is still living. To them both our sincere sympathy is extended.

A North of Ireland man, he was, as one would expect, intensely loyal to his King and his Country, and he chafed greatly that he was not liberated earlier to join up in the Great War.

Practically his whole professional life was spent in the service of the suffering and afflicted poor, and on behalf of them the writer is glad to pay this imperfect tribute to his memory, and to express his deep regret at his untimely death.

G. S. P. (Norwich).

JOHN CUSTANCE SHAW, M.R.C.S.Eng., L.R.C.P.Lond., Medical Superintendent,
West Ham Mental Hospital.

Ordinary Member since 1917.

It is with deep regret that we have to record the death, on May 3, from pneumonia, after a fortnight's illness, of Dr. John Custance Shaw, the Medical Superintendent of the West Ham Mental Hospital, at the age of 59 years.

Dr. Shaw hailed from Yorkshire and was educated at Richmond Grammar School, afterwards qualifying for the medical profession from Bart's Hospital. For about six years he was Assistant Medical Officer at the Hull City Mental Hospital. Then, after a short period of private practice, and some service in South Africa during the war of 1900-01, he re-entered psychiatry at West Ham, where he was promoted to be Medical Superintendent in 1916.

He was noted for his great kindness to the patients and staff, with all of whom he was deservedly popular.

THE ULSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY

Dr. M. J. NOLAN has been elected President of the above Society for the coming year.

NOTICES OF MEETINGS.

Annual General Meeting.—July 12-16, 1926, in London.
South-Western Division.—October 28, 1926, at the Hereford City and County Mental Hospital.