

Obituary

Edward William Anderson

Professor E. W. Anderson, who died on 2 September 1981, was one of the most senior and distinguished Fellows of the College. Details of his career and the service which he gave to his specialty have been recounted elsewhere and need not be fully repeated here. It is sufficient perhaps to observe the wide respect and affection he commanded among his colleagues, pupils and friends. And yet it has to be said that, owing to his somewhat retiring nature and dislike of any form of personal publicity, he was not well known to the present younger generation of psychiatrists. Those, however, who are older and fortunate enough to have been taught by him at the Maudsley, and later in Manchester, have cause to be grateful for the thorough grounding in phenomenological psychopathology they received at his hands.

Edward Anderson's interest in phenomenology derived from the period of postgraduate study he spent in Germany before the outbreak of World War II. There he came under the influence of Karl Jaspers and the Heidelberg school. He imported their teachings into this country where they were not then well known, so that he can be said to have founded in due course the Manchester school of phenomenology. Although some may have found that his teaching perhaps had a rather Teutonic flavour, it was his intimate knowledge of German psychiatry and his fluency in the German language which gave it its strength. However, his ideas and his contribution to psychiatric knowledge were by no means entirely derivative, but were based also, and considerably, upon vast experience and on his own astute and thorough powers of clinical observation.

While it is possibly still too soon to assess the effects of his teaching on the overall course of British psychiatry, its influence upon those lucky enough to be taught by him was far reaching and, in the earlier days at least, provided a welcome escape from the rather milk-and-water Meyerian approach prevalent at that time.

Edward Anderson was essentially a teacher of post-graduates. He was much less at home with undergraduates, being a somewhat uneasy lecturer to larger audiences and preferring to leave this task to his staff. His teaching also was too profound for most medical students, and so the tendency was for him to fail to whet their appetite for psychiatry. In any event, the share of the Manchester undergraduate medical curriculum which he was given, along with limited clinical teaching facilities, was pitifully small by any, much less today's, standards. With postgraduates it was a different matter, as those who undertook the Manchester DPM, for which he did much of the teaching himself, were quick to discover. With a small group of those with the right aspira-

tions he soon aroused enthusiasm by revealing his own.

His contribution to Manchester psychiatry was largely intramural and essentially academic. Except via those he trained, he probably had little influence on the Manchester psychiatric scene, disliking as he did so intensely the cut-and-thrust and intrigue of medical politics. Furthermore, although he seems to have enjoyed the University and the company of fellow academics, he appeared never to take completely to Manchester and its environs. Although Scottish by birth and educated in Edinburgh—a matter, incidentally, which he was always most unwilling to discuss—he hankered for the South, so that when the opportunity arose for him to be appointed Lord Chancellor's Visitor he retired from his Chair two years prematurely and moved to Frant in Sussex, where he lived until his final admission to hospital.

Although some found him reserved and perhaps a little bit hard to get to know, he was fascinating company to those fortunate enough to become his friends. He was a lively talker with a wide range of scholarly interests in many different subjects. He read widely, as became readily obvious when visiting his home, from the new books which he and his wife had just purchased and which were proudly displayed on a table in the living room so that they might interest his guests.

Edward Anderson's death may well come to be seen as the end of an era. He will be remembered for many things, not least for his penchant for snuff, which he always hoped, not very successfully, to persuade others to share. Several of his *obiter dicta* are worth quoting. One that springs immediately to mind is: 'Mental illness is no excuse for bad manners!' He will also be remembered for his perpetration of the term 'anankast', which many psychiatrists still find useful. Although he did not invent the term, he certainly went some way to prevent it falling into disuse. But that perhaps was because he had the touch of the anankast in his own personality. Although this may have given rise to a certain amount of insecurity at times, particularly in situations where he did not feel entirely at home, this trait undoubtedly contributed to his thoroughness and scrupulous attention to matters of detail.

Edward's death followed upon a long illness, the clinical manifestations of which would, ironically enough, have interested him greatly had he been able to observe them for himself. He leaves behind him many friends and a delightful wife and family. Margaret Anderson is indeed to be greatly admired for the unswervingly loyal support she gave him, not only in happier times, but also during his declining years.

W.H.T.