

Harvey (Williams) Cushing, For. Mem. R.S., Hon. F.R.S.E.

HUMANITY in general and medical science in particular have cause to regret the passing of one of the truly great men of our time—Dr Harvey Cushing.

He came of an illustrious medical family. Receiving his medical education at Boston, he migrated to Baltimore, where he came under the influence of the remarkable group of great medical personalities who then led the Johns Hopkins School—Halstead and Osler in particular. At this period he made his first visits to European centres, which were frequently repeated in later years. From 1912 to 1932 he occupied the Moseley Chair of Surgery at Harvard. His latter years were spent at Yale University.

After acquiring post-graduate clinical experience, he turned to the laboratory of experimental physiology. It is clear that from an early period he focussed his mind on the nervous system and with it the minute, obscure, and then unnoticed pituitary gland. With the imaginative insight characteristic of the great he concentrated on this latter problem, and when death finally intervened he had taken a major part in elucidating this controller of primitive and fundamental bodily activities in all its scientific aspects and connections, and had brought recognition and surgical treatment of its disorders to a high standard of efficiency. His intensive studies and progressive perfection of surgical treatment of one nervous disease group or entity after another is an awe-inspiring model of a life's work ordered by a master mind. The native genius, the courage, the iron will, the ability to recognise and seize opportunity, which combined for this achievement may be inferred from its magnitude.

Few have commanded such respect, admiration, and hero-worship from their pupils and associates as did Cushing; his influence on medical science and surgery to-day through his personal disciples is even more potent and nearly as widespread as through his extensive writings. Though with his mind ever bent on major objectives, his patients were his adoring friends; no detail concerning their welfare escaped his notice.

In spite of his great scientific activities, interests and ambitions, he felt the call of the Great War, and served with the American Ambulance

in France in 1915 and again from 1917–1919. While his activities were largely medical his *Life of Sir William Osler* is a notable contribution to general literature. His chief interest outside scientific medicine was in the history of medicine—he delighted to commune with the great medical personalities of past centuries.

His merit was recognised by learned institutions and societies in every country and their honours were showered upon him.

In his last years, though crippled from time to time by an affection of the legs, his output of contributions to medical science rose in quality and volume almost to the end.

His final illness lasted but a few days. His end—almost as if controlled in time and mode by the great mind that planned his life—leaves those who knew him to mourn a dear friend, but far above this sorrow is the inspiration of his vital personality and great achievement.

He was elected an Honorary Fellow in 1939, and died on October 7, 1939.

N. M. D.