Obituary

William Rowland Murray Alexander B.Sc., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Dr. Rowland Alexander died suddenly on August 21, 1970, at the age of 51. In September he was to have given the Heberden Round in Edinburgh and had deeply appreciated the invitation to perform this task. The Heberden Society owed a great deal to Rowland Alexander; his original papers, meticulously prepared, set a high standard and his discussions revealed the clarity of his thinking and the depth of his knowledge. In 1969 he was senior Honorary Secretary to the Society, bringing to this office the same quiet efficiency which distinguished all his work. Many friends who were saddened by the news of his death will surely be glad that the Heberden Society, by inviting him to give the Round, had recognized and honoured his scientific contributions to rheumatology and his devotion to the affairs of the Society.

He qualified in Edinburgh in 1943 and after several house appointments joined the R.A.M.C. in 1946, serving mainly in Trinidad. In 1948 he joined the resident staff of the Northern General Hospital, Edinburgh, where he developed an interest in rheumatic diseases. In 1949 he was awarded a Nuffield Research Fellowship and in 1951 a research fellowship of the American Rheumatism Foundation which enabled him to spend a year at Yale University working under the direction of Dr. J. R. Paul. He returned to Edinburgh and resumed his research and clinical activities in association with Professor J. J. R. Duthie, becoming a consultant physician in 1962. He was a member of several committees of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council and for three years he served as Chairman of the Education Sub-Committee. He made major contributions to

research in the anaemia of rheumatoid arthritis and in studies of immunological phenomena and the role of infection in that disease. With Professor Duthie he edited the notable monograph reporting the very successful Third Pfizer Symposium held at Edinburgh in 1967 and devoted to rheumatic disorders. He was elected a Fellow of the Edinburgh College in 1961 and was a member of the Clinical Teaching Staff of the University.

Those who were fortunate to know him as a friend will remember Rowland above all else for the unassuming and spontaneous warmth of his personality. This innate modesty could not long conceal the intellectual power which so finely complemented his humanity, and he will be remembered with equal esteem by his patients as a skilled and lovable physician, by others as a productive laboratory research worker, and by all who knew him as a person never too burdened by his own cares to assume those of others. His family, friends, and work were his life, and to all three he brought the same simple devotion. Recollections of the unstrained hospitality of his home, with good conversation ranging widely in the company of his charming family, will have a secure place in many minds. His scientific work leaves a permanent mark in the literature of rheumatology and in the ideas which he freely shared with colleagues in this and many other countries. His death has cut short a fruitful career and has left gaps in his home, in the Edinburgh Rheumatic Diseases Unit, and in the hearts of his friends which cannot be filled. Our deepest sympathy goes to Jane and to his three children.

A. G. S. HILL