OBITUARY

DR. CHARLES WILLIAM BUCKLEY

Readers of the Annals will be sorry to learn of the death of Dr. C. W. Buckley, who was until 1953 the Editor. Buckley might perhaps be regarded as the first European rheumatologist in the modern sense of the term, as he was the pioneer of our present approach to the subject. Practising as he did in a Spa at a period when the empirical outlook was universal, he maintained that the study of the rheumatic diseases must be objective and be regarded as a branch of internal medicine. In this way, as the result of systematic and accurate observation over a long period, he advanced the subject, and brought it for the first time in this country to the serious notice of the leaders of academic medicine. This service was acknowledged in 1933 by his election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians, which was at that time an unusual distinction amongst provincial physicians.

It was only last year that a special number of the Annals was dedicated to Dr. Buckley on the occasion of his 80th birthday, and readers will remember the tributes there paid to him and his work. In these circumstances, therefore, we need now only reproduce the anonymous obituary notice which appeared in The Times on May 31.

RHEUMATIC DISEASE AND ITS CURE

Dr. Charles William Buckley, M.D., F.R.C.P., a distinguished authority on rheumatic diseases, died on May 28, 1955, in his eighty-first year.

Born on October 10, 1874, the son of the late Henry Buckley, of Derby, he was educated privately and at St. Mary’s Hospital, London, where he was an entrance scholar and Kerslake scholar in Pathology and Bacteriology and qualified M.B., London, in 1898, becoming M.D. in 1899 and F.R.C.P. in 1933. He was senior physician to the Devonshire Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Buxton, consulting physician to the Buxton District Hospital, and lecturer in chronic arthritis and rheumatic diseases at the British Post-graduate Medical School of the University of London.

During the war of 1914-18 he was an honorary major of the Canadian A.M.C. He was later president of the Heberden Society and of the Section of Balneology and Climatology of the Royal Society of Medicine. Besides contributions to the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine and the British Encyclopaedia of Medical Practice, the Index of Treatment and various medical journals on his specialty, he published a work in 1938 entitled Arthritis, Fibrositis and Gout.

Buckley did valuable work both in the national and in the international sphere in his specialty. He took a prominent part in the committee work which began in the Royal College of Physicians and led eventually to the Empire Rheumatism Council. He helped materially on the literary side also, editing proceedings and journals dealing with rheumatism. In a field where “quackery” is all too frequent and where even medical men produce “cures” with little scientific basis, Buckley kept a clear mind and a critical faculty which often steadied the over-enthusiastic junior without being too discouraging. He saw clearly what spas could do and what they could and should not attempt. In this again his part, although not always popular, was important and in keeping with his scientific outlook. Buckley’s reward will be seen in the gradual conquest of the chronic rheumatic disorders which will surely come as industrial and social medicine becomes fully developed.

He married Lilian, daughter of the late Hugh Hughes, of Manchester, and had one son and three daughters.