

OBITUARIES

SIR LEONARD ROGERS, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.P.,
F.R.C.S., F.R.S.—1868-1962

Sir Leonard Rogers, an outstanding pioneer in tropical medicine, died in a Truro Hospital on September 16, 1962, at the advanced age of 94 years. The following account of his life work is excerpted mostly from one by Sir George R. MacRobert in the *British Medical Journal* for September 29, to which issue contributions were made by several others.

Rogers was born near Plymouth, England, on January 18, 1868, of distinguished Cornish parents. He won honors early, being awarded a mathematics prize while still at Plymouth College, and a pathology scholarship while studying medicine at St. Mary's Hospital in London; he read his first paper, on the effects of gallstones on the liver, in 1889. He obtained preliminary diplomas in 1891, passed the F.R.C.S. examination in 1892 (while still too young to be given the diploma), and later that year, passed the M.B., B.S. examination with honors.

After holding three residency posts in St. Mary's, and a demonstratorship in bacteriology, he entered the Indian Medical Service in 1893 and went to India. There he first prepared himself in Hindustani—and useful but unusual—in shorthand. In his earlier years he worked on kala-azar (introducing, years later, tartar emetic in its treatment), rinderpest, and surra. Subsequently, while professor of pathology at the Medical College in Calcutta, he studied among other things the venoms of seasnakes, discovered the flagellate stage of *Leishmania donovani*, and cleared up the role of *Entameba histolytica* in the causation of amebic dysentery and amebic liver abscess. Two outstanding accomplishments were his demonstration of the efficiency of emetine in the treatment of amebiasis, and of intravenous injections of hypertonic saline in the treatment of cholera. He also demonstrated the prophylactic value of cholera vaccine.

For many years he was deeply interested in the treatment of leprosy, and ultimately, when the leprosy clinic of the School of Tropical Medicine was established, he brought Dr. E. Muir into the work. In those days treatment was with chaulmoogra (hydnocarpus) oil, at first by mouth but later by injection; Rogers introduced the use of a soluble salt (sodium hydnocarpate, called Alepol) for intravenous use. His efforts contributed to "rescuing leprosy research from the doldrums."

Before retiring from India in 1920 at the mandatory retirement age, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, IMS, Rogers succeeded in establishing in Calcutta the School of Tropical Medicine with ancillary hospital, spoken of by one writer as "perhaps the greatest of Sir Leonard's accomplishments." That ultimately led the Rockefeller Foundation to provide for the adjacently-located School of Hygiene.

In England after his retirement, he was instrumental (actually with Oldrieve) in founding the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (BELRA). In 1925 he and Muir published a textbook entitled "Leprosy," a second edition of which appeared in 1940. In 1950 he published an autobiography, "Happy Toil," which received considerable attention.

In 1914 Rogers married Miss Elsie North, a surgical nurse working in Calcutta. Lady Rogers died in 1951. They had three sons, one of whom, a mathematician, is—as his father was—a Fellow of the Royal Society. Of his personal life, it is said that he was an inconspicuous and somewhat shabbily-dressed man, always a nonsmoker and a teetotaler—although at that time it was believed that the use of whisky was essential for survival in the tropics.

Rogers' honors were "innumerable"; some of them are indicated in the heading of this note. In England he was appointed to a post at the Indian Office, and when he retired from that he was given the honorary rank of major-general, and was awarded the K.C.S.I.—"a rare honour usually reserved for Governors and members of the Viceroy's Council."

A fact not generally known, he is said to have had a flair for investing and to have amassed a considerable fortune, most of which he gave to scientific bodies and charitable trusts. To the very end "it was his policy to watch like a hawk the way these moneys were used, giving advice and market information to the sometimes embarrassed beneficiaries."