

PERRY BURGESS

1886-1962

Mr. Perry Burgess, president emeritus of the Leonard Wood Memorial for the Eradication of Leprosy, died in a nursing home at Unionville, Ohio, on September 15th, 1962, a little more than three months after the death of his wife, Cora Turney Burgess.

Mr. Burgess was born in Joplin, Missouri, on October 12, 1886. After graduating from high school he became an ordained Methodist minister at the age of 17 years. He graduated from Baker University in 1912, and then pursued postgraduate studies at Drew University and theological courses at the Union Theological Seminary, supporting himself and his family by preaching at small churches on Long Island.

He became a secretary of the Layman's Missionary Movement, and was introduced to the art of organizing conventions and obtaining financial support for missionary work. Thereafter he devoted himself to raising of funds for humanitarian objectives. From 1917 to 1920 he was national director of the Near East Relief campaign; in 1920-1922 he promoted the Wilfred Grenfell Labrador Mission campaign; and in 1923-1924 the German Child Feeding campaign. In 1925-1930 Mrs. Dorothy Paul Wade and Mr. Burgess raised a substantial sum for leprosy research, which, after the death of Major-General Leonard Wood,

who was Governor-General of the Philippines when that project was undertaken, was named in his memory. In 1928 the Leonard Wood Memorial was incorporated and Mr. Burgess became its first director. In 1930 he was designated president, a post which he retained until his retirement in 1958.

Mr. Burgess played an important role in the organization of the Leonard Wood Memorial Conference on Leprosy held at Manila in 1931. From that conference came a revised classification of the disease, and great stimulation of interest in its study and control. There also the International Leprosy Association was born, and plans were laid for the publication of the *International Journal of Leprosy* as the official publication of the Association, with financial support from the Memorial.

Mr. Burgess, accompanied by Mrs. Burgess, took an active part in the International Congresses of Leprology held at Cairo in 1938, Havana in 1948, and Madrid in 1953. The Burgesses also took an active part in the Second Inter-American Leprosy Conference at Rio de Janeiro in 1946.

From 1943-1945 Mr. Burgess was a consultant to the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, and in 1945 he was selected as a special consultant to the Secretary of War.

Mr. Burgess was widely known as an author. His first book, "Who Walk Alone," is the fictional tale of a veteran of the U. S. Army who contracted leprosy in the Philippines and of his life at Culion. It is a very readable and moving story; it received the National Book Award for 1940 and also a Gold Medal from the Society for Libraries of New York University. His second book, "Born of Those Years," is an autobiography. It gives much insight into the forces which led Mr. Burgess into philanthropic work in the first place, and particularly into the leprosy field later on.

Mr. Burgess received many foreign decorations and honors. He was a Commander, Hospital Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem; Honorary Knight Commander of the Spanish Civilian Order; and honorary member of the Argentinian, Brazilian and other national societies of leprology. In 1956 he received the Damien-Dutton Award of the Damien Dutton Society of the United States.—J. A. DOULL