thirty thousand wounded and supervising surgical work. In the following July he was sent home invalided, mentioned in dispatches, and received the C.B. (military), but shortly afterwards was posted to the Southern Command, and, as consulting surgeon at Netley, supervised the surgical work from Portsmouth. On July 1st, 1919, after nearly five years of war service, he was created K.B.E. in the military division.

Retirement from active practice gave Sir Charters Symonds leisure for much service in good causes. He became treasurer of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, chairman of the Invalid Children's Aid Association, and chairman of the Children's Hospital at Hampstead. He was also for some years a member of the Advisory Committee to the Home Secretary on vivisection licences. In 1929 the University of New Brunswick conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Sir D'ARCY POWER, chairman of the Committee of Management of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund, writes:

Philanthropy was a marked feature in the mental make-up of Sir Charters Symonds. It was partly ingrained, partly perhaps the result of experience. The *res angusta domi* of his early life and the necessity of self-support by coaching at the beginning of his professional career taught him the value of money, with what difficulty it was earned, and how easily it was spent. He had always, therefore, a great sympathy with those who had failed in medicine and had either become destitute themselves or had left dependants with insufficient means of support. The work of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund appealed especially to him, first as a member of the Case Committee and more recently as treasurer. What he did, he did without counting the cost to himself. So long as he was well enough he came to the office almost daily, and spent, not minutes, but hours, in considering the applications and making himself master of the facts connected with individual applicants. At committee meetings he was thus able to give valuable advice about the amounts of the grants to be made. As treasurer he was equally successful, and it was a matter of supreme satisfaction to him when it was stated in the ninety-sixth annual report, issued on March 15th of this year, that "the income for the year is the largest since the foundation of the Fund." It had increased from £8,000 in 1921 to £17,700 in 1931, and, what to him was equally satisfactory, 675 grants had been made and 199 annuitants had been comforted in place of a meagre 241 and 178 respectively. It was a cause of grief that illness prevented his attendance at the conference on the medical charities during the Centenary Meeting of the British Medical Association last July in London.

As a surgeon Charters Symonds was one of the fast-diminishing body who saw, and had taken an active part in, the surgical revolution. Brought up in the old school, he watched the growth of Listerian practice as it was enunciated at Guy's Hospital by Sir Henry Howse. He observed the early mistakes and avoided them. He passed cautiously through the period of joint excisions and emerged a conservative surgeon. His alert mind saw the advantages of Listerian surgery, and he soon became a leading exponent of abdominal surgery as practised by a general surgeon in a large teaching hospital. He was brilliant as a teacher of students. Lacking the sarcasm of his remarkable colleague Mr. W. H. A. Jacobson, he drove knowledge into his pupils by impressing upon them the need for a sound basis of pathology and the habit of accurate observation. He instilled into them, too, the tact and kindliness of manner of which he was himself a master. This knowledge and these habits became of supreme value during the great war. The experience gained when he was a dresser and many wounds suppurated enabled him to treat successfully a type of wound with which his younger colleagues were unfamiliar. His conservatism taught him not to advise operation too hurriedly; his tact and geniality enabled him to work harmoniously with others and at the same time to promote harmony amongst jarring elements. If his character had to be summed up in a single word it would be expressed by Humanity.

[The photograph reproduced is by Elliott and Fry, Ltd.]

T. H. C. STEVENSON, C.B.E., M.D.

Late Superintendent of Statistics, General Register Office

Thomas Henry Craig Stevenson, son of James Stevenson of Strabane, co. Tyrone, was born in 1870 and was educated at University College, London. He qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., and graduated M.B.Lond. in 1896, and proceeded M.D. (State Medicine) in 1902. He entered the Public Health Service as an assistant school medical officer of the London County Council in 1905; in 1908 he became school medical officer to the Somersetshire County Council. A year later he was chosen to succeed Dr. John Tatham as Superintendent of Statistics in the General Register Office. His appointment coincided with that of a new Registrar-General, and the four pre-war years of his service formed a most fruitful epoch in the history of English official vital statistics. During the war many demands were made upon his energies, and it may be that those strenuous days undermined his constitution. He was, however, able to work hard and successfully for several years longer, but some little time before his retirement it was evident that he was feeling the strain. More than a year ago it became clear that rest from official duties was imperative, and he retired from office in August, 1931. It was too late; his health continued to fail, and he died on September 12th, 1932.

Stevenson was the fourth holder of an office created for William Farr. Farr's immediate successor, Ogle, will be remembered rather as an accomplished Greek scholar than as a statistician. The combination of quaintness and genius which made any volume of the long series of annual reports for which Farr was responsible entertaining as well as instructive, was no longer to be detected. Tatham was more interested in statistics than Ogle, and introduced various improvements, especially, perhaps, in the tabulation of mortality from cancer, but the annual reports of his time continued to be rather dull. Stevenson changed all that. Superficially nobody could have been less like Farr. Farr, although not a Welshman (he was of Shropshire stock), had much of the intellectual restlessness and excitability which are popularly attributed to the Celtic temperament. Stevenson was an Ulsterman, slow of speech, cautious in statement, and, far from being prone to overrate the numerical method, was habitually inclined to underrate his own technical knowledge. Fundamentally, however, the two men were much alike. Both were consumed by a desire to make medical statistics an instrument for the relief of human suffering. In his official writings Stevenson put a restraint upon himself which Farr never knew, but very little study of the reports and a quite superficial acquaintance with the man himself would be enough to convince any intelligent person that Stevenson was as alive to the preventive medical aspect of his work as Farr himself. Indeed, in his later years—in writing, for example, on the mortality of illegitimate infants in the first minutes of life—the righteous anger of a tender-minded man breaks through the restraints of an official style as effectively as in the days of Farr. Again, year after

year, one may read, following an analysis of the regional variations of mortality from pneumonia, some such comment as this: "Evidently pneumonia is to a large extent a preventable disease, and the North of England has still much to learn with regard to its prevention."

Stevenson enjoyed two advantages over his predecessors. His accession to office almost coincided with the beginning of a new system of tabulating vital statistical data, by units of administration instead of by registration districts. This change, at the price of destroying some measure of historical comparability, gave a reality to the data which they had begun to lose. Again, in the first census with which he was officially concerned, questions were introduced, notably that relating to the fertility of marriages, which had not before been thought practicable. The four annual reports for 1911 to 1914 and the analysis of the census of fertility are, from some points of view, Stevenson's most important writings; not that his powers deteriorated (he continued to produce work of the highest quality down to his retirement), but because over that period our vital statistics were in continuity with the past and undisturbed by the effects of war.

In a letter published in these columns little more than a year ago and bearing the signatures of the Presidents of the two Royal Colleges and of the Royal Statistical Society, attention was directed to, *inter alia*, Stevenson's work on infant mortality. Already, in the first report of the new series, that on the year 1911, one finds an essay on the causes of infant mortality, based upon an elaborate and *clear* tabulation, of much more value than anything before published. In subsequent issues minor improvements were effected, but twenty years ago the foundations were well and truly laid. Had Stevenson done nothing else but his work on infant mortality his reputation as a vital statistician would be secure. Of course, he did much more. In his time the statistical study of cancer was carried much further than before. In the annual report on 1913 Stevenson provided a wholly convincing demonstration that "during the period of active sexual life there is practical equality of mortality from breast cancer among the single and the married, but that after 45 the excess among the single becomes very pronounced"—a conclusion which has since been, sometimes, challenged by writers unacquainted with methods of statistical analysis, and, sometimes, recorded as a deduction from data utterly insignificant in comparison with those from which Stevenson drew his conclusion. In the fullness of time various other deductions from the national records made by Stevenson will no doubt appear as new discoveries of private workers who have souls above Blue Books.

It always hurt Stevenson a little that so few members of his profession troubled to read the annual reports of the Registrar-General. It adds to one's sense of regret for his premature loss that at the end of his career the tide began to turn. It is not suggested that, even now, many medical men read statistical reports, but in the last year of his life his medical, as distinct from his statistical colleagues (these latter had recognized his genius years ago) did Stevenson honour. The Royal Society of Medicine awarded him the Jenner medal, and the Royal College of Physicians awarded him the Bisset-Hawkins medal. In recognition of his war work Stevenson was created C.B.E. in 1918. Within the compass of a short obituary notice it is impossible really to justify a judgement on the life-work of one who has devoted himself to a special branch of research. To say that Stevenson was the greatest vital statistician since Farr means nothing to those who have never heard of Farr, and seems a polite hyperbole to those whose only knowledge of the subject is that Farr was the founder of modern medical statistics. The claim can only be canvassed by the very few who have really studied the official statistical publications of the last twenty-three years. Among these few there is little chance of disagreement.

Those who were honoured with Stevenson's personal friendship will feel the loss of the man at least as keenly as all statisticians will lament that so great an investigator was not spared to enrich the literature of his science with some work in which might have been summarized the results of more than twenty years' research. He was a great gentleman as well as a great statistician.

M. G.

SIR HENRY SIMSON, K.C.V.O., M.B., C.M.

F.R.C.P.LOND., F.R.C.S.ED., F.C.O.G.

Obstetric Surgeon, West London Hospital, and Dean of the West London Post-Graduate Medical College

We regret to announce the sudden death, on the evening of September 13th, of Sir Henry Simson, the distinguished obstetrician who was in attendance upon the Princess Royal at the birth of her two sons, and upon the Duchess of York at the birth of Princess Elizabeth and of Princess Margaret Rose.

Henry John Forbes Simson was born in India on December 12th, 1872, the son of Robert Simson of the Bengal Civil Service. During his student days at the University of Edinburgh he was elected president of the Edinburgh Royal Medical Society. He graduated M.B., C.M. in 1895, and obtained the F.R.C.S.Ed. in 1899, having held in the meanwhile resident posts at the Royal Infirmary, the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, the Royal Maternity Hospital, and the City Fever Hospital in Edinburgh. He then came to London in order to practise as an obstetric surgeon, and was appointed to the staff of the Hospital for Women in Soho Square. Not long afterwards he became assistant obstetric surgeon to the West London Hospital, and continued on the active staff till the time of his death. He also identified himself with the work of the West London Post-Graduate Medical College, of which he had been dean for some years past. In 1901 he became M.R.C.P., and was elected F.R.C.P. in 1926. He served for five years as examiner in midwifery for the English Conjoint Board, and was also examiner in obstetrics at the University of Leeds. In 1925 he was created K.C.V.O. His wife, Miss Lena Ashwell, the well-known actress, received the O.B.E. for her work during the war in organizing concert parties for the troops in France and elsewhere.

Sir Henry Simson was a foundation Fellow and member of Council of the British College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. For long past he had given anxious thought to the problem of the care of the pregnant woman and the teaching of obstetrics to medical students and midwives. His opinions were set out very frankly in a paper "Concerning maternal mortality in childbirth," which appeared in these columns on May 11th, 1929.