

## OBITUARY

CHARLES R. McCASH, Ch.M., F.R.C.S.Ed.

C. R. McCash, formerly Consultant Plastic Surgeon to Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton and St James' Hospital, Balham, died on 24th September 1979. He was born in Perth in December 1901 and educated at Fettes College in Edinburgh. He graduated in Edinburgh in 1925, took the F.R.C.S.Ed., in 1928 and the Ch.M. of St Andrews 3 years later.

He was appointed to the E.M.S. Plastic Surgery Unit in Gloucester as Assistant Surgeon under Emlyn Lewis in 1947 and later moved to the Frenchay Unit in 1949, until he joined Sir Harold Gillies' Unit at Rooksdown House in 1950. For almost the whole of his time in Basingstoke, he was employed as a Senior Hospital Medical Officer which denied him the clinical status to which he was entitled by his qualifications and experience. For this shameful state of affairs his seniors must share some responsibility. However, just before the Unit transferred to London, he was granted proper Consultant status and the injustice was remedied.

He was a kind, gentle man who would talk honestly and freely to any colleagues who sought his advice, however junior or inexperienced they were and put them completely at ease in the first few moments of any meeting.

He was one of the Founder members of this Association and also of that iconoclastic group the Second Hand Club before it became incorporated in the British Society for the Surgery of the Hand. He was particularly interested in hand surgery as will be shown by the list of his contributions to this and other journals. But his name will be best remembered in the years to come for his advocacy of the "open palm technique" in the treatment of certain cases of Dupuytren's contracture. When this revolutionary concept was presented at a clinical meeting of this Association in 1963, it was savagely denounced as a heresy by the plastic surgical establishment. It was an unforgettable and frightening experience to watch the "Promoters of the Faith" of British plastic surgery rise one after another to attack this well constructed and well presented thesis. But Charles McCash, the mildest of men, held his ground without any fear or rancour. This "heresy" is now common practice and there will be many patients and surgeons in the years to come who will have good cause to thank our late colleague for his astute observations and act of courage in leaving the open palm wound to look after itself.

MICHAEL N. TEMPEST