

John Fraser, M.B., C.M., F.R.C.P.E.

Dr JOHN FRASER was born in Thornhill, Dumfriesshire, and died on the 18th January 1925, in his eightieth year, following an accident when alighting from a tramcar. His whole career was intimately associated with the treatment of the insane in Scotland. He graduated in Edinburgh University with First Class Honours in 1870. After acting as resident in the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, he turned his attention to mental diseases and became assistant Medical Officer to the Fife and Kinross District Asylum, Cupar. A few years later he succeeded the late Sir John Batty Tuke, whose daughter he married, as superintendent. After seven years here, he left to take up the duties of Deputy Commissioner in Lunacy, a post he held from 1878 to 1895, when he succeeded the late Sir Andrew Mitchell, K.C.B., as Commissioner. He held this appointment until 1910, when he retired on reaching the age limit. During the whole of his career he was an active force in advancing new ideas. He became particularly interested in the boarding-out system, which is so peculiar a feature of Scottish Lunacy administration, and by which mental cases of a quiet and harmless nature, capable of enjoying the liberties of a natural home life under slight supervision, are boarded out under home conditions as ideal as can be secured. He was a strong advocate of the removal of all restraint in the treatment of mental cases, and of the nursing of male cases by trained female nurses, now so characteristic of all Scottish mental hospitals. He was also largely responsible for perfecting the arrangements against fire in asylums, and in seeing that the safety of the inmates was properly safeguarded.

Since his retirement he occupied himself in assisting various charitable institutions in the city, especially the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. He was a director of the Royal Scottish National Institution at Larbert for the Care of the Feeble-Minded. He was presented with his portrait, painted by Mr Fiddes Watt, R.S.A., on his retirement "in recognition of his long and useful service devoted to the interests of the insane, and of his professional and private worth." Temperamentally he was eminently suited for the work to which he had devoted his life, his genial, kindly nature and his enthusiasm proving invaluable to one occupying the positions he did, and enabling him to make for himself a prominent place among the great names associated with Scottish Lunacy administration.

Dr Fraser was elected a Fellow of this Society in 1896.

A. N. B.