Sir Victor Alexander Haden Horsley (1837-1915), C.B., F.R.C.S., M.D., D.C.L.

Photograph by courtesy of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum

EDITORIAL

March 1950

Sir Victor Horsley

This special number of our Journal deals with many aspects of disease of the central nervous system and includes articles by some of the leading authorities of the day on pathology, diagnosis, and treatment in cases of cerebral tumour.

To such a symposium the Editorial Committee felt that the accompanying portrait of Sir Victor Horsley would be an appropriate adornment. It is well that in our studies of the achievement of the neurosurgeons of today we should sometimes pause to look back upon the pioneer work of those who, with a vision which penetrated far beyond that of their contemporaries, laid the foundations upon which our modern work has been built.

The genesis and development of his experimental work are well known to all serious students of neurology and need no recapitulation here; what are, perhaps, not so well known to the

present generation are Horsley's personal enthusiasm for his research, and his burning passion for right, as he saw it. It was these qualities which inspired him in his achievement, though at times they inevitably led him into the fiercest conflict with many whose more cautious natures led them to adopt a less dynamic attitude to evils of the day of which he was intolerant, and into the solution of which he would fling himself with a zeal which not infrequently out-ran discretion.

Such a passion in great men, though it often brings enmity in its train, may nevertheless be the very fount of their activity and the real source of much of the critical work of later generations, which, but for this passion that inspired their forebears, might never have seen the light. It is in the spirit of admiration for that we salute the memory of the great pioneer of neurosurgery whose picture we here reproduce.

MAURICE DAVIDSON

Neurological Number

The popularity of our last neurological number (published in 1939) and the length of time that has passed since it appeared, seem to be adequate reasons for the subject matter of this issue.

Of the various subdivisions into which the physician's and the surgeon's work tends to be grouped, neurology seems to be one of the most inevitable, and some degree of specialism in it essential. The extent of its detail would seem to force this upon the physicians, whilst the neurosurgeon's field has been made very much his own by a host of elaborate diagnostic procedures and special techniques, a very necessary restriction on tempo, and the great need for experienced judgment in so vital a sphere.

Disease, however, has no respect for man-made boundaries. None of us can afford to be unacquainted with the salient points of specialities other than our own. Neurological problems quite often face each one of us and that must be a large part of our apology for this small group of articles, designed, as they are, as part of an informative bridge between the neurologists and their professional colleagues.

The degenerative diseases of the central nervous system and the agenesis have always loomed largely across the neurological field. The brilliant clinical descriptions of these conditions which were made in the second half of last century have not been surpassed, nor has our knowledge of their fundamentals or our therapy of their victims ad-