

Dr. ERIK D. SÖDERSTRÖM, of the Swedish Evangelical Mission, was a well-known and much-loved figure in Ethiopia, and will be missed by all who knew him; more even by Ethiopians than by his many European friends and acquaintances. His work lay chiefly in Wallega Province; and in Lekempt, the capital, he built his hospital and laboured for many years, the Italian occupation and Ethiopian reoccupation interrupting for seven years, during which time he worked in South Africa. Erik Daniel Söderström was born at Ringarum, Sweden, in September, 1890, and studied medicine in Edinburgh from 1910 to 1916, when he qualified M.B., Ch.B. From there he proceeded to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and obtained the D.T.M., and then until he sailed for Ethiopia in 1919 he held house appointments in the Midlands. Once in Ethiopia, he, with his wife, settled down in the then little-known town of Addis Ababa for a full two years, until permission could be obtained for work in the interior. This was granted, and they set off for the west, where, in Lekempt, they did medical missionary work in primitive huts for eight years. Ras Tafari, the then Regent and now Emperor Haile Selassie, gave money for a hospital and this was finished in 1931. From then until the Italian invasion the work progressed well, but the actual appearance of the enemy brought this to a standstill, and the missionaries escaped through the Sudan to take up an appointment with the Church of Sweden at Ceza, their mission station in Zululand. Here Dr. Söderström laboured for five years. The return to Addis Ababa in 1943, the few months' work with the British Red Cross Medical Unit, and the departure once again to take up hospital work in Lekempt were joyful experiences—though it was no easy matter to pick up the threads under such altered conditions. His welcome back was undoubted—he was a father to them all and was loved by all, high and low alike. He died on Nov. 10 of complications following typhus, probably caught through a visit to the prison during an epidemic he was fighting, which carried off hundreds in the neighbourhood.—G. L. L. G.

Medico-Legal

MEDICAL MAN'S SLANDER ACTION

£2,000 Damages against Woman

In the King's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice on April 12 Mr. Justice Charles gave judgment for the plaintiff, awarding him £2,000 damages, in an action for slander brought by Dr. Arthur Henry Hennessy, of Sanderstead, Surrey, against Miss Irene Boyanton, of Sanderstead. The plaintiff's case was that the defendant made false statements about him, in which she alleged that he had made love to her and criminally assaulted her in his surgery on Sept. 26, 1944, and that he had thereby been greatly injured in his character and profession.

This High Court action was a sequel to a disciplinary inquiry held by the General Medical Council on May 31 and June 1 and 2, 1945. Dr. Hennessy had been summoned before the Council on the charge that, being a registered medical practitioner, and standing in professional relationship to a lady described as "Miss A.B.," he on Sept. 26, 1944, attempted to commit adultery with her, indecently assaulted her, and assaulted or was party to an assault upon her. The complainant was "Miss A.B." After a hearing *in camera* which lasted altogether more than eleven hours, the decision of the G.M.C. was announced in public by the President, who said that the Council found that the facts alleged against Dr. Hennessy had been proved to their satisfaction, and that in respect of the facts so proved they judged him to have been guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect and instructed the Registrar to erase his name from the *Medical Register*.

In the High Courts on April 10, 11, and 12 Mr. Holroyd Pearce, K.C., appeared for Dr. Hennessy, and, dealing with the alleged slander, said that the words were uttered by Miss Boyanton to another doctor in Sanderstead and to a garage proprietor. "The tragic part of this case came later. Miss Boyanton set the General Medical Council in motion in 1945. Deliberate perjury before that body resulted in Dr. Hennessy being struck off." During the course of the hearing Mr. Justice Charles repeatedly referred to the defendant's "lies." He ordered the documents to be impounded to consider whether Miss Boyanton should be prosecuted in the criminal court for perjury. With reference to the action of the G.M.C. in striking

Dr. Hennessy off the *Register* his lordship said: "Not having the mass of evidence which was before me, their inquiry resulted, in my firm and clear conviction, in a gross miscarriage of justice." In the course of his judgment he said that the slanders alleged were very wicked lies if they were not true. His lordship accepted Dr. Hennessy's denials and rejected Miss Boyanton's story of a criminal assault. Giving his reasons for disbelieving her allegations he pointed to the fact that throughout the relevant time one of the plaintiff's patients, with her infant daughter, had been in the waiting room adjoining the surgery, had seen Dr. Hennessy and Miss Boyanton come out and had noticed nothing unusual about them. Referring to certain evidence which had been called in support of Dr. Hennessy's case his lordship found it difficult to believe that if the General Medical Council had had that evidence before them they would not have believed it in preference to that of Miss Boyanton, for she patently lied. He must award the plaintiff substantial damages to exhibit to the world at large that he (his lordship) had not believed one single word of the slanders, and he granted an injunction to restrain the defendant from uttering any similar slanders in future. He hoped in conclusion that the G.M.C. would see their way to reinstate Dr. Hennessy on the *Medical Register*, and he undertook at counsel's request to communicate with the Council.

Universities and Colleges

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

A quarterly meeting of the Council was held on April 11, with Sir Alfred Webb-Johnson, President, in the chair.

The Walker Prize of £100 was awarded to Prof. E. C. Dodds, F.R.S., for his work on the synthesis of stilboestrol and dienoestrol, which has proved most valuable in the treatment of prostatic cancer. The John Hunter Medal and Triennial Prize of £50 was awarded to Dr. Joan M. Ross for her outstanding work in pathological anatomy, particularly in regard to the collection of pathological specimens illustrating injuries and diseases occasioned by the war. The Begley Prize for 1946 was awarded to Otto Fleischner of the University of Vienna.

Mr. W. Rowley Bristow was elected Robert Jones Lecturer for 1946.

Dr. G. M. Ververs, superintendent of the Zoological Society, and Mr. A. J. Durden Smith, surgeon to Mount Vernon Hospital, being members of the College of 20 years' standing, were elected to the Fellowship.

Surg. Capt. Lambert Rogers was re-elected a Member of the Court of Examiners.

It was decided to hold special courses in anatomy, applied physiology, and pathology for the Primary Fellowship Examination, September to October, 1946.

The following was set as the subject for Jacksonian Prize Essays for the year 1947: "The Surgery of the Lower Oesophagus and Cardiac End of the Stomach." The following was set as the subject for the Cartwright Prize Essays for the five years ending 1950: "The Healing of Injuries and Post-operative Lesions of the Jaws." Copies of the regulations governing the award of both these prizes may be obtained from the secretary of the College.

Diplomas of Membership were granted to J. Cox, J. R. Hawkings, and Margaret H. Pond.

Mr. Charles Leopold Mayer, of New York, who on previous occasions has given considerable sums for medical research, has awarded a prize of £1,000 to Mr. Terence Millin, F.R.C.S., of All Saints Hospital, London, in recognition of his contributions to the advancement of surgical treatment of the enlargement of the prostate. The prize was presented to Mr. Millin at a meeting of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons on April 11.

The following lectures will be delivered at the College (Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.) at 5 p.m. on each day:

Erasmus Wilson Demonstrations: April 29 and May 1, Mr. L. W. Proger, Some Original Pathological Specimens from the Hunterian Collection; May 2, Mr. T. M. Tyrrell, Inflammation and Repair in the Tissues of the Eye.

Hunterian Lectures: May 9, Prof. D. H. MacLeod, Endometriosis—A Surgical Problem; May 16, Prof. B. W. Rycroft, War Wounds of the Eye and their Treatment; May 23, Prof. J. Charney, Conservative Treatment of Fractures of the Femoral Shaft; May 30, Prof. C. G. Rob, Diagnosis of Abdominal Trauma in Warfare.