ROYAL
COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS
OF IRELAND

Francis Carmichael Purser

Born: 1877

President: 1933 – 24 February 1934 (died in office)

Died: 1934

Francis Carmichael Purser was born in India, his father being a member of the Indian Civil Service. He was educated at Galway Grammar School and Trinity College Dublin, graduating in 1899 and receiving his MD in 1901. Having spent some time in Berlin and London he was elected Fellow of the College of Physicians of Ireland in 1904. His initial clinical appointment was to Mercer's Hospital. However, he then transferred to the Richmond, Whitworth and Hardwicke Hospitals from where he practised predominantly as a neurologist.

He held the posts of President of the Dublin University Biological Society and the Irish Medical Association. He was appointed Professor of Medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons Medical School in 1917 but relinquished that post in 1926 becoming Honorary Professor of Neurology at Trinity College Dublin. In 1933 he became King's Professor of Medicine at that institution.

During World War I he held the rank of Major and was a consultant in neurological disorders for Ireland. He was mentioned in dispatches and was awarded an MBE. He played rugby for Ireland on three occasions in 1898 when a student.

He was held in high esteem by his peers; his diagnostic ability being much appreciated as were his teaching skills. He was a lover of the countryside and travelled extensively throughout the British Isles. Most of his leisure time was spent on his farm in County Wicklow. His cardinal attribute was modesty and it was only with difficulty that he was persuaded to assume the offices which came his way.

He became President of the College on Saint Luke's day 1933 and sadly died suddenly at his residence on 24 February 1934. He was survived by his wife, a son and three daughters. One daughter, Honor Mabel Purser, graduated in medicine and became a Fellow of the College of Physicians. Miss Sarah Purser, the celebrated artist, was his aunt.

JH

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