

An Oration by Prof. Gibson

1975 MacFadzean Memorial Issue



(An oration at the memorial service on 6th December, 1974)



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Alexander James Smith MacFadzean, Professor of Medicine in the University of Hong Kong for more than quarter of a century died a week ago today.

He spent his most productive years here and they were, I believe, his happiest years. Here we have no abiding city, but Hong Kong came as close to a true home for him as man can find on this earth. He was wont to disguise this, as he defended his native Ayrshire and proclaimed his allegiance to his University of Glasgow but the great depth of his feeling for Hong Kong showed through and was never clearer than when he came to leave us only a few months ago.

The allegiance of Professor McFadzean was something worth having. He was a redoubtable fighter for what he thought right and his formidable artillery was often deployed in the cause of justice. But a forbidding manner was no more than a part of the man. The human situation could generate a warmth of a spirit which surprised those who recognized him only in an official guise or had never been exposed to his charms.

Professor McFadzean played many parts in the life, of Hong Kong, but it was as a doctor and particularly as a teacher of medicine that he was at his best. From this flowed his inspiration and this was the source of his unrivalled influence. Indeed no single man has had so great an influence on medicine here.

As a principal architect of a rebuilt Faculty of Medicine, after the war, he

imbued it not only with an undeviating sense of duty in the ordering of its affairs but also with a sense of compassion in dealing with individuals which is too easily forgotten in the rush of our daily life.

Looking back on his achievements when he came to retire, Professor McFadzean was inclined to disparage what he had accomplished in the light of what he would have liked to have achieved. It is in the nature of ideals that we can never reach them and a source of many frustrations, but he had a remedy for such moods in the high esteem of his colleagues and even nearer to his heart in a happy family life in which the bonds of affection were strongly forged. The severing of these bonds is a grievous blow to his family and sympathy for his wife and children is deep, universal and heartfelt.

Alexander McFadzean was a man of many talents and he traded well with the same for the good of Hong Kong. He has been the ruler over many things and he has entered into the joy of his Lord.



Emeritus Professor A.J.S. McFadzean, O.B.E., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P., F.R.A.C.P., F.A.C.P., F.R.S.E., Hon. F.R.C.S., J.P., Professor of Medicine from 1948 to 1974 and Vice-Chancellor in 1965.