Obituary – Nachruf – Nécrologie

STEFAN ENGEL (London) 1878-1968

Stefan Engel M.D. died on 22nd February 1968 in London. He was born on 7th September 1878 in Reichenbach, Silesia and studied at the Universities of Breslau, Würzburg and Munich. His early anatomical studies in Breslau under Ponfick (1903/4), where he took his M.D., and his subsequent paediatric work with Schlossmann, in Dresden (1905/6), and in Düsseldorf (1906/13) not only laid the foundations but also saw the first results of his research work which continued almost to the very end of his long life. Among his early publications are his classical studies on the correlation between the anatomy of the breast and its capacity for lactation, the relationship between ingested fat and its presence in the milk, tuberculin sensitivity and cholostrum chemistry. This work was recognized through the award of the title of Professor. Engel combined his research activities with clinical practice and published one of the first general textbooks on the care of infants. This book was printed in fourteen editions and was translated into a number of languages.

At the end of the First World War he was appointed director of the childrens hospital at Dortmund. This he rebuilt along principles which were revolutionary then and are sound to this day. His work on occult tuberculosis, tuberculosis meningitis and on the anatomy and radiology of the bronchial lymph glands was carried out during this time. He founded and was co-editor of “Kinderärztliche Praxis”. The “Handbuch der Kindertuberkulose” was edited jointly by Clemens von Pirquet and Stefan Engel. He also edited the “Handbuch der Röntgen-Diagnostik und -Therapie im Kindesalter” with L. Schall, and he was founder and co-editor of “Ergebnisse für die gesamte Tuberkuloseforschung” and of “Annales Paediatrici”.

In 1936 Stefan Engel was forced to emigrate and he made London his new home. Although this proved to be the end of his career as a paediatrician, it may be regarded as a blessing in disguise. Engel was now able to devote all his time to the research for which his anatomical, pathological and clinical experience had fitted him so well. He began as Research Fellow at The Hospital for Sick Children, and after the war, when he practiced as a pathologist in the Emergency Medical Service, he was Honorary Research Fellow at the Royal College of Surgeons. As well as a large number of papers, Dr. Engel documented his new findings in a series of monographs. In 1947 he published “The Child’s Lung”, in 1962 “Lung Structure” and in 1966, at the age of 88 years, he published “The Prenatal Lung”.

Stefan Engel will be remembered as one of the last pioneers of paediatrics. Not the honours bestowed on him but his high clinical ability, his distinguished and consistent versatility and thoroughness as a research worker over the astonishing span of some sixty years, the lucid style of his publications and his organizing ability will secure a place for Stefan Engel in the history of medicine.

Ch. E. Engel (London)

Stefan Engel was a collaborator of Acta Anatomica over a great many years.