

**Charles Hunter Stewart, D.Sc., M.B., C.M. By Professor  
J. Lorrain Smith, F.R.S.**

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PROFESSOR HUNTER STEWART as an undergraduate at the University of Edinburgh was distinguished for his special attainments in the subject of Organic Chemistry.

After taking the Degree in Medicine, he spent some time in post-graduate study in Munich and Paris. In 1884 he was appointed Assistant to Professor Sir Douglas Maclagan, and his duties were to give instruction in the newly established Laboratory of Public Health. He remained in this office for fourteen years, and in 1898, when the Chair of Public Health was founded by the generous benefactions of Dr Bruce and Sir John Usher, Hunter Stewart was appointed to the office. This post he held till 1924, when he resigned, having then completed as Assistant and Professor forty years of devoted service.

His contributions to the science of Public Health were chiefly on the subject of ventilation, and he published reports on schools, public buildings, and hospital wards. Later he inquired into the relation of the composition of the air, including ground air, to the incidence of disease. He also carried out and published investigations on the sterilisation of milk and on pulmonary tuberculosis.

The main occupation of his life, however, was his teaching. During his period of official life the science of Public Health made remarkable progress. Many reasons for this could be given. The progress of medicine as a whole and of bacteriology in particular completely changed the attitude of the medical profession and of the community to preventive medicine. It became more and more recognised that medicine can contribute to the community not only by remedial care of patients suffering from disease, but also and no less by directing measures towards the maintenance of health and the prevention of illness. The full effect of this change of attitude has not yet been realised, but it was the duty of Professor Hunter Stewart, by keeping pace with the rapid and continuous progress made by the science of hygiene on the one hand and social legislation on the other, to maintain the standard of university teaching of the subject. With this in view he planned and equipped the Usher Institute of Public Health, the gift of which to the University

was part of Sir John Usher's benefaction. The Institute included laboratories for physics, chemistry, and bacteriology in their application to Public Health. The University of Edinburgh was one of the first of the medical schools of the country to give degrees in the subject of Public Health. In 1875, when Lister was a member of the Faculty of Medicine, the University undertook to give courses of special teaching and degrees in the subject for medical graduates who intended to take part in the Public Health service. The degrees served their purpose, though in later days it became necessary to arrange also for courses of instruction suitable for a diploma. Many of the men who passed through the department, and took the degrees, rose to high positions in Public Health, and to the preparation of his students for their special work Professor Hunter Stewart devoted himself with his whole energy. He was a genial colleague, and his loyalty to a high ideal of scientific training in his subject was much appreciated by his students. He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1888, and died on 30th June 1924. The greater part of his scientific contributions were published in the Society's *Transactions* and *Proceedings*.