OBITUARY

MARY MICHAEL-SHAW, 1897–1963

Born on January 31, 1897, Mary Michael entered the London School of Medicine for Women in 1914, qualified with the conjoint diploma in 1922 and graduated M.B., B.S., in 1923. She was appointed house surgeon at the Royal Free Hospital and later held a house surgeon’s appointment at the Lock Hospital where she started to gain experience of the subject to which she devoted her professional life.

She and her architect husband later went to Kenya where she became the medical officer in charge of child welfare and venereal diseases. In 1933, after some 5 years abroad, they returned to England and Dr. Michael-Shaw was appointed to the Venereal Diseases Department at the Royal Free Hospital. In 1938 she became Director of the Department, taking over on Dr. Margaret Rorke’s retirement, and continued to administer this department until her own retirement in March, 1958. During these years she was appointed Teacher in V.D. in the University of London.

In 1939 she was appointed Medical Officer in Charge of the Special Clinic at the Salvation Army Mothers’ Hospital in Clapton, a position which she held for 3 years. Her articles published in the Daily Mirror early in the second world war, first brought to the attention of the general public the rising incidence of V.D. and the dangers thereof. Shortly after the articles appeared, she was asked to join the Ministry of Health as part-time assistant to Col. L. W. Harrison, where the women’s clinics became her special responsibility. She helped to put the venereal diseases into proper perspective and worked hard to encourage her patients to understand more about their disease and to face the future without the terrible sense of guilt which oppressed so many of them. She had considerable knowledge of prevailing social conditions and her interest in her patients extended well beyond the clinic walls. Many of them had reason to be grateful to her for her kindness and practical help. She was particularly interested in the problems of syphilis in pregnancy. Always ready with pertinent advice, both medical and otherwise, she was a member of the committee which ran the Highbury Hostel for unmarried...