



RUPERT BLUE, M.D.
Washington, D. C.
1867-

*Sixty-ninth President, A. M. A.
Detroit Session
June 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 1916*



Rupert Blue,

DR. RUPERT BLUE was the first Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service to be elected for the presidency of the Association, in recognition of the remarkable development of public health work under his direction and particularly for his efficient service in the eradication of bubonic plague in San Francisco in 1903, 1904, 1907 and 1910. Doctor Blue is the oldest ex-president of the Association living in the Centennial year.

He was born in Richmond County, North Carolina, May 30, 1867, his parents moving shortly afterward to Marion, South Carolina. He was educated in the public and private schools, and attended the University of Virginia in 1889 and 1890. Doctor Blue graduated from the University of Maryland with the degree Doctor of Medicine in 1892, and received the degree Doctor of Science from that institution in 1908. Immediately after receiving his medical degree in 1892 he entered the U. S. Public Health Service as intern in a Marine Hospital; became Assistant Surgeon in 1893; Passed Assistant Surgeon in 1897, Surgeon in 1909, and Surgeon General in January 1912. During this time he was stationed at Baltimore, Galveston, Charleston, San Francisco, Portland, Oregon, Milwaukee, New York, Norfolk and New Orleans, having been assigned to hospital, quarantine and other public health duties, which was a fitting preparation for

the responsibilities and duties concerned with the office of Surgeon General of this important Government service.

When cholera threatened our shores in 1900 the President of the United States sent Doctor Blue to Italy to study one of the sources of this disease. In 1903 and again in 1907 he was placed in charge of plague eradication measures in California, and handled a difficult situation with the result not only that the disease was controlled, but also that all interests in the State were harmonized. The latter was the most important single work he performed, and during its conduct he advanced and proved the principle that rat proofing is the essential means necessary to prevent plague in urban communities. He demonstrated that the eradication of plague is entirely practicable and, in consequence, that cities may be kept free from the disease.

In 1905 he was second in command of the measures taken in New Orleans and vicinity to eradicate yellow fever.

As Director of Sanitation of the Jamestown Exposition in 1907, Doctor Blue had practical experience in the reduction of mosquito-breeding areas to prevent malaria. After completion of the course in Tropical Diseases at the London School of Tropical Medicine in 1910, he was assigned as adviser to the Governor of Hawaii for the reduction of mosquito-breeding areas in that territory, with the object of guarding against the introduction of yellow fever and malaria after the opening of the Panama Canal. It was from this duty that he was called to become Chief of the Service. In 1910 he was appointed the United States delegate to the International Medical Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentine.

In 1913 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science from the University of Wisconsin, and Doctor of Public Health from the University of Michigan.

In his presidential address to the House of Delegates at the New York session in 1917 he urged the appointment of a committee to outline recommendations for the best method of utilizing the facilities of the American Medical Association in preparing for war. This was promptly approved, and a committee appointed comprising Dr. Arthur D. Bevan, Chairman, Dr. Alexander Lambert and Dr. John W. Kerr, which was an important step in mobilizing the medical profession for military service.

After the expiration of his service as Surgeon General in 1919 he was placed in charge of the activities of the United States Public Health Service in Europe, from 1920 to 1923, and represented the Service at the Office Internationale de Hygiene Publique in Paris. During this period he also was the American delegate to the Con-

ference of the League of Nations at Geneva, and served as adviser to the United States Mission at the Lausanne Peace Conference in 1922 and 1923.

Doctor Blue is a Fellow of the American Public Health Association, a member of the American Society of Tropical Medicine, and an honorary member of the San Francisco County Medical Society. He was also a member of Phi Beta Kappa Society. In 1925 he received the honor of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France.

Since his retirement from the U. S. Public Health Service in 1931, and a career of eminence in every field of public health, he has resided in Washington, D. C.

