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OBITUARY NOTICES

OF

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PART ii.

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OBITUARY NOTICES

OF

FELLOWS DECEASED.

PART II.

[Reprinted from 'Year-book of the Royal Society,' 1902 and 1903.]

SIR ANDREW CLARK, BART. 1825 (?)—1893.

The long delay which has occurred in the appearance of an obituary notice of our distinguished Fellow, Sir Andrew Clark, has been due in part to the hope that the promised volume of his biography might be available for our sketch. It has, however, not yet appeared, and we must not wait for it any longer.

Sir Andrew Clark was born in Aberdeen about the year 1825. His parents both died when he was very young. He had never known them, and, curiously, he went through life in the belief that he was a year or two younger than his real age. It is possible, indeed, that the discrepancy was greater than is suggested, for if his birth be placed in 1825 instead of 1826 (as he thought) it still makes him only 19 at the time that he obtained the diploma of the London College of Surgeons. The age of 21 is required at this College by statute. Sir Andrew died on November 6, 1893, having then, presumably, reached the age of 68 or 69. His death was caused by a stroke of apoplexy, which took him whilst in the full enjoyment of health and mental vigour. He was at the time of his death President of the Royal College of Physicians, and also of the foremost Medical Society in London—the Royal Medical and Chirurgical. To his duties in connection with these presidencies, and more especially with the first, a large share of his time and energies during the last few years of his life had been devoted.

He received his medical education partly at Dundee and in part at Edinburgh, and he held various appointments as assistant to his professors at a very early age. Soon after obtaining his diploma he

entered the Navy, and was engaged at Haslar Hospital for seven years, chiefly in pathological work. At this period of life he was in delicate health, was considered phthisical, and was sent, on leave of absence, to Madeira. At Haslar he married his first wife, whom he lost a few years later. Having been engaged chiefly in pathological and museum work at Haslar he was induced, at the age of 28, to transfer his energies to the Medical School of the London Hospital, and in the following year was elected Assistant Physician to the hospital itself.

He now commenced practice in London. It was not until ten years later that his great success came. His reputation and his practice had been slowly but steadily increasing, when, at the age of 41, he succeeded to the post of full Physician to the hospital. This at once enlarged his sphere as a teacher. In the same year the last great epidemic of cholera in London occurred, and the wards of the hospital were crowded with patients. His zeal and assiduity in connection with this outbreak and his unsparing devotion to his patients secured him the good opinion and friendship of Mrs. Gladstone, and, subsequently, of her illustrious husband. Through their influence, backed by his own sterling merits, his professional connection was soon very widely extended. At the age of 44 or 45 he removed to a commanding residence in Cavendish Square. Here he lived the whole of the remaining twenty-three years of his life, immersed in occupations which he enjoyed, but which were of the most laborious and exacting kind. He had married for the second time at the age of 33, and he left a son and daughter by his first wife, and one son and three daughters by his second.

Sir Andrew Clark was a man of most attractive personality who endeared himself to all who knew him. His love of work, his zeal in investigation, and his devotion as a teacher were unbounded. Although never really in strong health, and obliged to live strictly by rule, he could endure without obvious fatigue an amount of work which would have been impossible to most men. It was a matter of unceasing regret to him that the absorption of his time in private and hospital practice prevented him from cultivating, as he would have liked, the more strictly scientific aspects of his profession. His friends were accustomed to hear frequent expressions of his determination to relinquish practice and devote himself to investigation; the time, however, never came. So high was his estimate of the functions of a teacher, that long after his practice had become such as to demand all his time, he was most punctual in his attendance at the London Hospital, and he retained his post of physician as long as the rules of the Institution allowed him to do so.

Although Sir Andrew was not the author of any epoch-making book,

and no great discovery claims his name, yet his influence on the medical profession and on medical science was great. He had assumed the vocation of a teacher at a very early age, and in every appointment which he held he was unwearied in the lecture-theatre. His enthusiasm in his subject and his flow of appropriate language gave to his lectures a charm which always secured him a crowded and attentive audience. His gift seemed to lie rather in oral instruction than in written works, and it is precisely this kind of power which it is the most difficult to estimate. He was, moreover, a most fluent speaker, whether in lecture or conversation; but he was a fastidious writer, and did not like to permit any hasty composition to go forth under his name. The leisure for quiet composition was never his. Thus it has come about that neither our own Society's "Transactions," nor those of the medical associations with which he was connected, can boast of many papers by him. The medical journals of the day occasionally secured a lecture by the aid of a reporter, but only very seldom did anything appear which was actually written out by himself.

The subjects with which the name of Sir Andrew Clark are chiefly associated are "Fibroid Phthisis," "Renal Inadequacy," and "Catheter Fever"; but the range of his interest was unbounded. To the first volume of the "London Hospital Reports," he contributed, under the characteristic title of "Gleanings from the Field of Observation," a series of notes on very varied clinical topics.

At the time of his death, Sir Andrew was at the zenith of his fame, and was acknowledged by all as the leading physician of the Metropolis. He had throughout his career been very liberal, not only in gifts of money, but in the bestowal of his time without recompense.

Sir Andrew's portrait was painted by Mr. Frank Holl and presented to him as a gift from a large circle of friends. It is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

The new pathological theatre at the London Hospital has been inscribed to Sir Andrew Clark's memory, and it was in part built by a special fund collected in order to provide some fitting memorial of him.

It is a pleasant fact to be kept in memory by his friends that his last consultation, that during which his apoplectic seizure occurred, was a gratuitous one. He was engaged with a lady in discussing a work of charity when the call to cease from all work came to him.

J. H.