

Sir J. Halliday Croom, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S. By Dr A. H. F. Barbour.

(Read January 14, 1924.)

By the death of Sir Halliday Croom, a Fellow of this Society since 1886, the last link has been severed with the Edinburgh Medical School of the great days of J. Y. Simpson, Syme, and Lister, and there has passed out of Edinburgh life a well-known figure, whose courtly bearing and courteous manner commanded attention.

Born in the United Presbyterian Manse of Sanquhar in 1847, he came to Edinburgh as a boy, when his father was called to Lauriston Place Church. He was educated at the Royal High School, studied Medicine in Edinburgh University, where he graduated after a distinguished course in 1868. Two years later he became assistant to Professor Simpson in the Chair of Midwifery, and this determined his future work. In 1878 he began his brilliant career as an extra-mural lecturer at Minto House, and for twenty-five years was one of the most successful and best-known teachers in the Edinburgh Medical School. He succeeded Sir Alexander Simpson in the Chair of Midwifery in 1905, from which he retired in 1921. When President of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, he received the distinction of knighthood.

His singular power as a teacher has been thus described by one who had the most intimate knowledge of it: "Only those who were associated with him knew what infinite trouble he took to prepare his systematic lectures, even down to the smallest details. He put his whole soul and mind into their preparation and delivery. His eloquent and felicitous illustrations were always telling, and, culled as they were from a ripe experience, many of them have become aphorisms, indelibly fixed in the minds of thousands, who in the course of his fifty years of teaching have had the privilege of passing through his hands."

In his clinical teaching of Gynecology in the Royal Infirmary, with which he was connected as Gynecologist for many years, the same remarkable gifts showed themselves. It is, however, with the Maternity Hospital that his name is specially associated. There it was that for forty years he gave of his best in time and strength to furthering the interests of Midwifery.

Croom had a charming personality, sensitive to the attitude of others and to the graces of life, careful of those small courtesies which make the

wheels run smoothly, were it an exquisitely penned and worded line of congratulation, of apology or direction; happy to advance the interests of a friend, desperately unwilling to hurt or offend the least intimate or the most undeserving. Many will remember the gracious host who tactfully and cordially made each guest welcome and was never so intent on his own good story as to fail in drawing out from others their opinions and information.

This notice would be incomplete without a reference to a deeper side of his nature which he rarely showed, but which comes out in a letter to an intimate friend: "As one gets older one's creed gets simpler. I am grateful to God for all His mercies and endless forbearance, and my hope and belief are that that mercy and forbearance will be extended to us in the world beyond. For I feel sure that when that wondrous hour comes when the road leads down to the last slope which we must all follow, and I come near the dark waters over which the evening mist hangs thick, I shall find the faithful friend, whom I have so often forgotten and wronged, waiting at hand to give me a last word of cheer, or it is just possible a word of welcome, as I set my foot on the shore which is so far off and yet so near."