

Obituary.

HENRY MONRO, M.D., F.R.C.P.

The prevailing epidemic has numbered amongst its victims one of the oldest members, and a former president of our Association. Dr. Henry Monro died at his house in Upper Wimpole street, on May 18th, 1891, aged 74, after a brief illness. He was the last of a long line of physicians, who from father to son followed the same specialty, four being in direct succession physicians to Bethlem Hospital. The first of them was the son of Alexander Monro, D.D., the principal of the University of Edinburgh, who shortly before 1688 was nominated by James II., Bishop of Argyle. The revolution, however, prevented his assuming the dignity, and in consequence he came to London in 1691, and sent his son James to Balliol College, Oxford. The latter graduated M.D. in 1722, and in 1728 was elected physician to Bethlem Hospital, then standing in Moorfields. His son John, after having been educated at Merchant Taylors' School, also proceeded to Oxford, where he had a distinguished career, becoming a Fellow of St. John's College and a Radcliffe Travelling Fellow. He studied medicine in various places, first at Edinburgh, then at Leyden, and also in Paris and Germany. Returning to England he was appointed joint physician with his father to Bethlem Hospital, and in 1752 sole physician. Dr. John Monro "possessed a correct and elegant taste for the fine arts, and his collection of books and engravings was very considerable. He was deeply versed in the early history of engraving, and the specimens he had collected of the works of the earlier engravers were select and curious" (Dr. Munk, Roll ii., 183). His eldest son died at Oxford, and a younger, Thomas, proceeded to Oriel College, graduated in medicine and became assistant physician to his father at Bethlem Hospital, and physician in 1792 on the death of the latter. Dr. Thomas Monro was also devoted to the fine arts, and is well known as the friend and patron of the celebrated Turner, who was a constant visitor at his house. The fourth physician of Bethlem Hospital in this series was Edward Thomas, the son of the last, who like him graduated at Oriel College, and was elected physician to the hospital in 1816. The subject of this notice, Henry Monro, was the second son of the last mentioned. Born in 1817, he was educated at Harrow, and like his father and grandfather graduated at Oriel. He studied medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and became a Fellow of the College of Physicians in 1848. All these five physicians were Fellows of the College, and the portraits of all five are to be seen there, presented by Henry Monro, while those of his father and himself were painted by him. As visiting physicians at Bethlem Hospital had been discontinued, he became in 1855 physician to St. Luke's Hospital, an office he held till 1882, when he was elected consulting physician. Though the fifth of his family as a psychologist, he was the first who contributed by his pen to the literature of this special subject. In 1850 he published a treatise on Stammering, an affection from which he suffered through life to a small extent. He believed that stammering "is a chronic chorea of the speech muscles arising from a morbid irritability of nervous fibre, resulting in a loss of equilibrium between the mental and motor nervous forces, in which (whether stammering assume the more mental or more physical type) in every case the physical motor power is unequal to the pressure of the mental force and is driven consequently into spasmodic action when pressed upon by the will." In the following year he published "Remarks on Insanity," in which he still further develops the same idea, and applies it to insanity, which he says "is an affection consequent on depressed vitality . . . that when the cerebral masses are suffering from this condition of depressed vitality, they lose that static equilibrium of the nervous energies which we call tone, and exhibit in their functions the two different degrees of deficient nervous action, coincidentally, namely, irritable excess of action and partial paralysis . . . that these two degrees of deficient nervous energy do not fall

alike upon all the seats of mental operations, but that there is a partial suspension of action of the higher faculties, such as reason and will, while there is an irritable excess of action of the seats of the more elementary faculties, such as the conception of ideas, etc., which is exhibited either by excessive rapidity of succession of ideas or undue impressions of single ideas." Dr. D. H. Tuke, in his presidential address (1881), has pointed out that this doctrine of Dr. Monro's is a still clearer statement of the theory that insanity is caused by the depression or paralysis of the higher nervous centres and excessive action of others, a doctrine which Dr. Hughlings Jackson has adopted and extended, applying to it the hypothesis of evolution and dissolution as enunciated by Herbert Spencer. Insanity, according to this view, is dissolution beginning at the highest cerebral centres, the dissolution being either uniform or partial, and also varying in "depth," and Dr. Tuke further remarks in his work on "Sleep-Walking and Hypnotism" that the doctrine of positive and negative states of Dr. Monro is even more applicable to the changes involved in dreaming and sleep-walking, these being a physiological liberation of energy of one portion or centre of the brain, and a persisting stability of another part which, freed from control, may come into active play (p. 7). The whole of this treatise by Dr. Monro is characterized by thoughtful observation, as is an article published by him in the second volume of our Journal on the Nomenclature of the various forms of insanity. Among other topics he gives a good account of so-called "acute dementia," to which other names have been assigned by different writers. He proposed the name of cataleptoid insanity, "the symptoms bearing a striking resemblance in some points of view to catalepsy."

Dr. Monro was a regular attendant at the meetings of the Fellows at the College of Physicians, where in 1861 he had filled the office of Censor, and in other years that of Councillor. He was greatly interested also in the various Lunacy Bills which were for so many years before the legislature, and a diligent attendant at committees thereon. His genial and kindly nature brought him many friends in both Houses, and their advice was of much assistance at this period. But beyond professional interests he had a great and never failing delight in art, which he inherited from his grandfather and great-grandfather, and he was rarely absent from Christie's when an important sale of pictures was taking place. His taste and judgment here were excellent, and he was no mean artist himself, as the portraits executed by him at the College sufficiently testify. Though latterly he had somewhat failed in strength, yet a few years ago he looked singularly youthful for his age, and no one would have supposed that he had seen seventy years. Among his sons he leaves none, we regret to say, in the profession to carry on the line of psychological physicians.

G. F. BLANDFORD.

H. G. SUTTON, M.D.

We have to record the death of a very old member of our Association, one ill spared from general and special medicine; we refer to Dr. H. G. Sutton, physician to the London Hospital. He, with Dr. Hughlings Jackson, more than 25 years ago began to distinguish himself as a pathologist.

He did very excellent work in showing how few of the so-called local diseases were really local, they were but local manifestations of general pathological states. He pointed out that in such a disease as Bright's not only was the kidney tissue affected, but that there were widespread changes involving the nervous tissues as well. Dr. Sutton was a man of the widest sympathies, and always had a strong liking for affections of the mind and their rational treatment. He was not only a physician but a refined man, who believed in the value of outside culture for the hard-working physician, he himself spending much of his leisure in the study and practice of music and of art. Deeply