

**A. A. Scot Skirving, C.M.G., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.S.**

WHEN in future years the recent graduates of Edinburgh University meet together and talk about their former Professors and teachers, the name of Mr A. A. Scot Skirving will frequently be mentioned. Many stories will be told of him, and they will all illustrate his individuality of character and his kindly, loving disposition. To few men is it given during their life to acquire the love and respect of so many friends, who were drawn to him by his sterling honesty and worth and the high principles that ruled all his actions in life.

Skirving was an Academy boy, and later as a student and a graduate was an enthusiastic forward in the Academical Football Team. The impetuous enthusiasm that characterised his daily life and practice was equally evident in the playing field, where he was ever an invigorating and enthusiastic leader of many wild rushes down the field.

When he was a graduate of six years' standing and was commencing the practice of surgery in Edinburgh, the South African war broke out, and he went there as a Surgeon, attached to the Imperial Yeomanry Field Hospital. He served in the field, and when proceeding up country with his Unit was captured by De Wet. He was not long a prisoner, however, as Skirving put before his captor the claims of himself and his Unit to be considered non-combatants and the right to be liberated. For his services in South Africa he was mentioned in Despatches and awarded the C.M.G.

On returning again to Edinburgh he resumed work as a Surgeon at Leith Hospital, and was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary. At Leith Hospital, where he soon became Senior Surgeon, he did a large amount of surgical work which was always characterised by enthusiasm, accuracy, and thoroughness; but, as was always a feature with him, the cases he described most fully, and the references he made most frequently to his work, were to illustrate such mistakes as he in common with others had made and the errors in judgment he had committed.

When Assistant Surgeon in the Royal Infirmary he was appointed Lecturer in Surgery at the Dental College, and none of the recent graduates of that school will forget the enthusiasm with which he taught his subject and the interest in it he inspired.

On the outbreak of the recent war he was mobilised as an Officer of the Second Scottish Hospital, with which he served at Craighleith. Later he

proceeded to France as a Major in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Those who were his colleagues there know the splendid work he did and how on one occasion, when an Air Raid occurred over the Front Line Hospital to which he was attached and many of the staff were wounded, Skirving, who was in the Operating Theatre, carried on with his work and completed his operations by candlelight and with such assistants as were available.

During the course of his career Mr Skirving carried out research work; but here, again, his enthusiasm was most keenly aroused when he discovered a fault in surgical technique due to inefficient steam sterilisation. His work on this subject was communicated to the Edinburgh Medico-Chirurgical Society, and at the time aroused great interest and led to a careful revision of this essential point in all surgical technique.

Mr Skirving was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1924.

As a writer he was the author of a revised book on Applied Anatomy and on Operative Surgery. He contributed also various articles to current medical literature. It will, however, neither be as a surgeon, a research student, or an author, but as the colleague and the man that all loved and respected, that the memory of Archibald A. Scot Skirving will be revered. It will be as a chivalrous knight of surgery, the defender of justice, and an honourable gentleman, that his name and memory will be treasured by all who had the privilege to call him friend.

He died on 14th June 1930.

H. W.

J. J. M. S.