

I come next to a loss which is the greatest which has ever befallen our Society, that of our distinguished Honorary Fellow, Dr. Matthews Duncan. We should have mourned his loss to science, as one of the greatest men who have helped to perfect the art of Obstetric Medicine, even if he had remained merely an Honorary Fellow, living at a distance. But since he removed to London and took an active part in the work of our Society, we have learned to admire and esteem him more: and now feel that his death has left a blank in our midst, which nothing can ever fill.

James Matthews Duncan was born in April, 1826, at Aberdeen, where his father was engaged in commerce. He was educated at the grammar school under the mastership of Dr. Melvin, and at Marischal College, Aberdeen, where he took the degree of M.A. in 1843. Having commenced the study of Medicine at Marischal College, he continued it at Edinburgh. Later, he spent some time in Paris, and made use of the large opportunities for observing necropsies. These afforded to lay the foundations of his extensive knowledge of the pathology of the

puerperal state. Then he returned to Aberdeen to take the degree of M.D. in 1846, at the age of 20.

The event which decided what special branch of the profession he should follow was his appointment in 1847, soon after his graduation, as private assistant to Sir James Simpson, of whose Midwifery class he had been a member while studying at Edinburgh. Simpson was at that time engaged in those experiments with ether and other substances which led to the general introduction of chloroform as an anæsthetic. It is a well-known story how Matthews Duncan was the first person ever rendered insensible by chloroform, and how Simpson himself, and Keith, subjected themselves to the same experiment on the same night.

Four years later, on ceasing to be Simpson's assistant, he commenced private practice in Edinburgh, and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1851. He rapidly gained success in practice, but from the first devoted a large amount of time and labour to research and literary work. He had a large share in the establishment of the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, and was one of its original physicians. In 1853 he began a course of systematic lectures on "Midwifery and the Diseases of Women," which gained ever increasing fame, and established his reputation as a great teacher. In 1861 he was appointed Physician for the Diseases of Women to the Royal Infirmary, and it was in this position that much of his research and teaching was carried on. His writings commenced with one published in 1853, in the 'Monthly Journal of Medical Science,' entitled "The Theory of Menstruation in Early Pregnancy: Superfoetation and the Site of Insertion of the Ovum." In this he showed how menstruation might occur in early pregnancy from the decidual cavity. In 1855, appeared the "Statics of Pregnancy," in which the physical cause of the usual position of the foetus in utero was studied; and a paper "On the Mode of Presentation of Dead Children in Labour." Other papers quickly followed; in 1856 one "On

a hitherto undescribed Disease of the Uterus, namely, unnatural Patency of the inner extremity of a Fallopian tube : in 1857, one "On the Internal Surface of the Uterus after Delivery ;" and in 1858, "Notes on the History of the Mucous Membrane of the Body of the Uterus."

Most of these papers were published in the 'Edinburgh Medical Journal,' or the 'Transactions' of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The chief work, however, which formed an epoch in the history of Midwifery was the series of papers first published in a complete form in 1868 under the title of 'Researches in Obstetrics.' This contained some of the articles already mentioned, and others published before in the Medical Journals, whose fame had already led to the election of Dr. Matthews Duncan as an Honorary Fellow of our Society in 1862. A similar honour was conferred upon him in later years by a large number of Societies on the Continent and in America ; but we may remember with satisfaction that we were the first in this way to acknowledge his distinction.

In the 'Researches in Obstetrics' the various articles were seen to form a connected series of investigations on four main subjects:—The Statics of Pregnancy; the Pelvis studied with a view to Obstetrics; the Physiology and Pathology of Pregnancy and the Puerperal State; and the Mechanism of Natural and Morbid Parturition. The most striking feature in this book was the demonstration of the action of the sacrum as a beam and not as a wedge; of the mode of transmission of the weight of the body to the pelvis; and its effect in modifying both the normal development of the pelvis and the production of its various deformities. It was for the first time made evident how a true comprehension of the mechanical forces which affect normal development makes it easy to understand the production of all pelvic deformities, including the rachitic and the malacosteon pelvis. More especially, all the peculiarities of the oblique pelvis of Naegele were now accounted for; and, conversely, this form of pelvis afforded, and still affords, one of the strongest pieces of

evidence of the truth of Dr. Matthews Duncan's views. The fourth part of the work dealt chiefly with the power exerted in labour; and with the Naegele obliquity of the foetal head. It was contended that the lateral obliquity described by Naegele as existing at the brim is not found in normal labour, though it is characteristic of the flattened pelvis. This view has been generally accepted, and the five movements of the foetal head, as enumerated in the old text-books, of which obliquity was one, have thereby been reduced to four.

Dr. Matthews Duncan continued his researches on the mechanism of parturition; and the articles published at various times, with several of those collected in the 'Researches in Obstetrics,' were included in another work, published in 1875; and entitled "contributions to the Mechanism of Natural and Morbid Parturition, including that of Placenta Prævia." In this work several points were elucidated, which have since found their place in all text-books of midwifery. Among these are the nutation at the sacro-iliac joint in labour; the behaviour of the cervix uteri in the later months of pregnancy, during labour, and after labour; and above all the mechanism of the expulsion of the placenta. It is the view advocated by Dr. Matthews Duncan, that the placenta normally descends folded upon a longitudinal axis, and not inverted, that has led to the general change which has taken place in the management of the third stage of labour, whereby expression of the placenta has been substituted for traction upon the funis.

On several of the subjects thus dealt with, further controversy has taken place and still continues, both abroad and in this country, notably with regard to the leverage of the sacro-iliac ligaments, to the behaviour of the cervix uteri in pregnancy and labour, and to the normal mode of expulsion of the placenta. But I believe it may be justly said that, in all of them, Dr. Matthews Duncan has proved to be right in the main; and that neither theoretical criticisms nor later researches

have led to more than certain qualifications or modifications of his views in minor points.

A favourite subject was dealt with in "Fecundity, Sterility and Allied Topics," published in 1886, and was further elaborated in his Gulstonian lectures delivered after his removal to London, and published in 1884. He took great interest in the estimate of the average puerperal mortality, as shown in an article "On the Mortality of Childbed in Maternity Hospitals, published in 1870." His estimate of the ordinary puerperal mortality at a higher figure than had generally been imagined was criticised at the time by the Registrar-General, but afterwards admitted by him to be well-founded.

All the contributions hitherto enumerated were upon midwifery. The first work which had an important influence on the science of gynæcology was one entitled "A Practical Treatise on Perimetritis and Parametritis," published in 1869. Like the obstetrical writings, this had a sound basis in the facts of pathology: and revealed to many the possibility of making an accurate diagnosis between forms of inflammation hitherto often merged together under the title of pelvic cellulitis. The author's great influence was shown by the way in which, through this treatise, the new terms of perimetritis and parametritis rapidly became familiarised in this country.

On the death of Sir James Simpson in 1870 it was generally expected that Dr. Matthews Duncan, who had already a European reputation as one of the greatest obstetricians of any time, would succeed to the Chair of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh. The choice of the electors, however, fell on Dr. A. R. Simpson. This event had doubtless much to do with the result that he accepted the post of Obstetric Physician and Lecturer on Midwifery to St. Bartholomew's Hospital when it was offered to him on the retirement of Dr. Greenhalgh in 1877.

Dr. Matthews Duncan threw himself with characteristic ardour into his new sphere of work. Not content with the usual three or four lectures a week he adopted the

plan of lecturing on every week day morning throughout the summer session, and continued it to the end. This additional time enabled him not merely to lecture on midwifery as it is, but to enliven his subject with graphic sketches of its history, and to portray to his students what manner of men they were to whom we owe its advances.

He was most effective as a lecturer, with that deliberate impressive manner which we so well remember in the debates of our Society, and the impression which he gave of a perfect certainty on those subjects where certainty is possible, based on a very wide experience, and a complete knowledge of the literature of the subject. He made many enthusiastic disciples, and felt a just pride in having a larger class than had ever attended obstetric lectures in London before.

The high esteem felt by the profession not only for his scientific eminence, but for his uprightness of character, and his plain spoken candour in dealing with his patients, soon brought him a very large practice. He still found time, however, for much scientific work. The debates of our Society gained an added interest from his presence and constant participation, and he occupied the chair as President in the years 1881, 1882. Our 'Transactions' are indebted to him for many important papers, one or more in each year. Among them may be mentioned especially those on lupus of the female generative organs, with their splendid lithographic plates, which made the volume for 1885 so memorable.

Besides the Gulstonian lectures, delivered in 1884, and which have already been mentioned, Dr. Matthews Duncan edited Dr. Charles West's 'Lectures on the Diseases of Women,' adding to them some important material. He also published some of his clinical lectures, delivered every fortnight through the winter session at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, under the title of 'Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of Women.' This work went through four editions, and in the extended form which it assumed in the

later editions, became almost equivalent to a systematic treatise on gynecology. That he did not take a narrow view of its sphere is evident from the titles of some of the chapters, such as those on Retention of Fæces, on Aching Kidney, and on Hepatic Disease in Gynecology and Obstetrics. It thus appears that almost the only thing he did not do within his department of medicine was to write a systematic treatise on Midwifery. His was the nobler part of making the discoveries which minor men embody in their text-books.

In so controverted a subject as Gynecology, it is natural that his views were not so generally accepted as in obstetrics. But his influence was great; and, by his determination to test all theories by the strict proof of pathology, and his hatred of any approach to quackery, he did much to elevate our branch of the profession.

With his devotion to the study of pure Midwifery, Dr. Matthews Duncan never aspired to be himself an operator in abdominal surgery. It was perhaps, partly the consequence and partly the cause of this, that his temperament always inclined to the cautious and conservative side as regards any operative treatment. It was a spirit which had doubtless its useful applications, but one which, if held universally, would have prevented some of the modern advances of surgery. It was shown in an article entitled "Is Ovariectomy justifiable or not?" published in the 'Lancet' in 1857. In later years he was completely converted by the improved results of ovariectomy, and was a warm admirer of Dr. Keith; but he was always reluctant to sanction any operation for removal of the uterine appendages, on account of fibroid tumour or other cause, and he was never convinced of the benefits of trachelorrhaphy.

Amongst other honours bestowed upon Dr. Matthews Duncan, the Universities of Cambridge and Edinburgh conferred upon him the degree of LL.D.; the University of Durham that of honorary M.D. He was an honorary Fellow of the King and Queen's College of Physicians, a

Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London, a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, as well as of that of Edinburgh; he was nominated by the Crown as a Member of the General Medical Council. He held the office of Examiner in Midwifery to the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London.

In 1860 he married Miss Jane Hart Hotchkis of Castlemilk, Dumfriesshire. He had in all thirteen children. Mrs. Matthews Duncan and five sons and four daughters survive him.

Of late years Dr. Matthews Duncan generally spent the whole of the months of August and September at Appin House in Argyllshire. Those who had the fortune to enjoy his hospitality in that lovely spot know how charming was his household. Being fully occupied in London with his hospital teaching and private practice he used to devote some of this time of rest and recreation to writing those papers of which our Society has had the benefit.

In the spring of last year his health began to fail, and he suffered from gouty eczema, and from attacks of angina. He began as usual the summer course of lectures which was to have been his last before his retirement. He spoke for the last time in our Society at the June meeting; but about the middle of June he was compelled to discontinue his lectures. Towards the end of July, accompanied by his wife and some of his family, he went to Blankenberghe in Belgium. On August 7th he proceeded to Baden-Baden. Slight attacks of angina continued, and on August 17th he had a very severe one lasting several hours. After this the urine became albuminous; there was cutaneous œdema, and œdema of the bases of both lungs. He improved, however, so much under treatment, that it was intended to take him back to London on September 2nd. But on September 1st he died suddenly at 5 p.m. while sitting in bed supported by pillows.

The funeral took place on September 8th; the first

part at St. Mark's Church, North Audley Street; the interment at East Finchley Cemetery. Most of the leaders of the profession who were not out of town at the time were present, and Sir Richard Quain was deputed to represent the Queen.

JAMES MATTHEWS DUNCAN, M.A., M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.

We have to record the premature death of one of the most prominent obstetricians in London. He was a native of the city of Aberdeen, where he was born in April, 1826. He was educated at Marischall College and studied medicine at Edinburgh and Paris. After graduating at Aberdeen he became assistant to Sir James Simpson. He was Physician to the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and Lecturer on Midwifery. In 1857 he gave out some very characteristic opinions on ovariotomy: "Is ovariotomy justifiable or not?" The *British Medical Journal* says:—"On the evidence of the statistics of that time he condemned ovariotomy, and much later, guided by his instincts, which were essentially those of a conservative

teacher, he refused to teach that any such operation was justifiable, till long series of statistics, furnished by reliable experts, proved that the risk was very slight."

Dr. Matthews Duncan was not an ovariologist, and it is not therefore surprising that he was unable to form a just appreciation of a surgical procedure which he himself did not practise. In 1866 his work on "Fecundity, Fertility, and Sterility," appeared—the foundation of his Gulstonian Lectures delivered after he came to London.

In 1868 he published his "Researches in Obstetrics." At that time he was Lecturer on Midwifery in Surgeon's Hall Medical School; Physician for and Clinical Lecturer on Diseases of Women in the Royal Infirmary. In 1869 he published a practical treatise on "Perimetritis and Parametritis." The following works from his pen appeared in succession: 1870, "On the Mortality of Childbed" and "Maternity Hospitals;" 1875, "Contributions to the Mechanisms of Natural and Morbid Parturition;" 1879, "Papers on the Perineum;" 1879, "A New Edition, with Additions of West, on the Diseases of Women;" 1879, "Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of Women" (successive editions of this work each greatly enlarged, appeared in the years 1883, 1886 and 1889); 1884, "Sterility in Women." Dr. Matthews Duncan was in busy practice until early in the spring of the present year.

He commenced his Summer Course of Lectures in May and appeared to be well and in his usual health. On the 4th of June he spoke for the last time at the Obstetrical Society of London. At the end of the month his health broke down completely, and he relinquished his Hospital practice. On July 26th he went to Blankenberghe, where his condition improved, and he took to sea bathing. At the end of a week spent at the Belgian watering-place, in company with Sir W. Turner, he left and proceeded with his family to Baden-Baden. On August 17th he was seized with a violent attack of angina, and similar attacks occurred on the 18th and 19th.

Dr. W. H. Gilbert, of Baden-Baden, was called in, and under his care the patient obtained great relief. On August

20th Dr. Aldren Turner arrived at Baden-Baden in answer to an urgent summons, and found Dr. Duncan in a very weak condition, with œdema of the lungs, orthophœa, albuminuria and slight anasarca. There was complete loss of appetite. The œdema of the lungs was greatly relieved by cupping; within five days the patient could lie down without suffering from dyspnœa, the appetite had returned and a few days later albuminuria disappeared.

Arrangements were made to remove Dr. Duncan to London on September 2nd. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon of September 1st, as he lay in bed comfortably supported by pillows, breathing suddenly became stertorous. Dr. Turner, who happened to be standing on the balcony of the apartment, having heard the sound of laboured breathing, went into the room and found that Dr. Duncan had expired.

The funeral service was conducted in part at St. Mark's, North Audley Street, on Monday, Sept. 8th, the Rev. Borrodale Savoy, Rector of St. Bartholomew's the Greater, officiating. The Queen was represented by Dr. Quain, F.R.S.; the University of Edinburgh by Sir William Turner, D.C.L., Professor of Anatomy in the University; and the Royal College of Physicians of London, in the absence in Scotland of the President, Sir Andrew Clark, by Sir Risdon Bennett (an ex-president), Sir Henry Pitman (Emeritus Registrar), Sir Henry Acland and many of the Senior Fellows. A large proportion of the past and present staff of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, of leading obstetricians in London, of former pupils of the deceased from all quarters, as well as friends in other professions were present. The interment took place at Islington Cemetery, East Finchley, the Rev. H. J. Nixon, curate of St. Mark's, officiating. Dr. Duncan married in 1860 Miss Jane Hart Hotchkis, daughter of the late Mr. Hotchkis, of Castle-milk, Dumfriesshire. Mrs. Duncan and five sons and four daughters survive him.

Dr. Duncan was a Fellow of the Royal Society, LL.D. of Edinburgh and Cambridge, Honorary M.D. of Dublin, and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London. At

different periods he was Examiner in Midwifery to several universities and colleges, and was also an honorary member of British and foreign learned societies. He attended Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Albany in her confinement, and had a large and fashionable practice in London at the time of his death. The *Edinburgh Journal* says:—"Dr. Duncan's style of writing is strong and lucid, but not elegant. His sentences are short and vigorous, and every word is meant to tell; this compression makes some of his works, especially that on the 'Mechanism of Parturition,' far from easy reading. His opinion on any of the subjects with which he dealt was always one that had to be reckoned with, and already much of his work has found its place among the accepted doctrines of Obstetrics. But beside and above his professional achievements, he has left behind him the unblemished record of a manly, upright, honourable character. In the words of the late Dr. John Browne in describing him:—"I know him as a man of genuine capacity and worth, strong-brained, right-minded, true-hearted, with that deep abiding sense of the sacredness of truth in everything—in observation, inference, and statement, not less than in word and deed, in science not less than in life, without which genius, learning, and eloquence, be they ever so great, must be mischievous."

"The nobility of Duncan's character was never more marked than in the last weeks of his life. He felt that, owing to his impaired health, his work in this world was coming to an end, and that his duties as a teacher and hospital physician had drawn to a close; whilst even if he lived the extent of private practice would have to be much curtailed. But never a murmur escaped him. He was most considerate to the members of his family and those friends who were about him, and thought much more of their wishes than of his own. He had no fear of death, for he had lived so as to be always prepared for it."

The portrait which we present is printed from a photograph by Mr. A. Bassano, of 25, Old Bond Street, London, W.



IN MEMORIAM.

JAMES MATTHEWS DUNCAN, M.D., F.R.S., ETC.

(With Portrait.)

THIS great obstetrician died at Baden-Baden on September 1st. His fame was so widespread, his work so valuable, and his individuality so marked, that a short review of his professional career and opinions will doubtless prove of interest to our readers. His personal character, his manly bluntness harmoniously blended with wit and geniality, and other equa

admirable qualities, earned for him profound love and esteem amongst his relatives and pupils. His memory requires no vulgar and tedious panegyric, nor need we dwell on the numerous academic honors which were showered upon him from an early stage of his career. They were the result of the fame reaped from his labors, and it is with those labors that we have to deal.

Dr. Matthews Duncan was born in April, 1826, in the city of Aberdeen, where his father was engaged in mercantile pursuits. Educated in his native city, he early displayed scientific instincts. His professional studies were carried on in Edinburgh and Paris; in 1846 he took the degree of Doctor of Medicine at Marischal College, Aberdeen. Paris, in those days, afforded the industrious student unusual opportunities for studying pathology. The mortality was high, the facilities for obtaining necropsies were great, and the system of medical education did not force study on the unwilling, at the expense, perhaps, of the able and the industrious. Young Duncan eagerly sought every case of death during pregnancy or after labor, in times when obstetrical pathology would hardly be said to exist. He thoroughly examined the pelvic viscera, connective tissue, and peritoneum in these victims of the relative ignorance which then prevailed. Thus was founded his fame as a scientific authority in obstetrics and gynecology. Thanks to him and to certain excellent French tutors and fellow-students who were associated with him in his labors, humanity gained invaluable knowledge of the treatment and prevention of diseases of the puerperium.

Attracted by his merits, Sir James Simpson engaged Dr. Duncan as his private assistant. The history of the introduction of anesthesia is familiar to every American. Our readers are, therefore, doubtless aware that, when Simpson began his experiments on chloroform, Dr. Duncan was the first person who submitted to be placed under the influence of that compound.

Dr. Duncan at this period commenced private practice in Edinburgh. He was appointed physician to several institutions, and in 1853 he began a course of lectures on midwifery at the Extra-Mural School which rapidly established his reputation as a teacher.

When thus settled in Edinburgh he soon attracted the attention and excited the admiration of the profession by the valuable contributions which he made to science and to medical literature. A fair review of all his work would fill a whole number of this JOURNAL, but some notice must be taken of his best known theories and doctrines. The first of his writings appeared in April, 1853, in the *Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, and was entitled "The Theory of Menstruation in Early Pregnancy, Superfetation, and the Site of Insertion of the Ovary." He brought forward anatomical proof of the possibility of menstrual fluid being naturally or easily derived from the lining membrane of the cavity of the uterus, up till the end, at least, of the second month. The mucous plug which sealed up the os uteri might easily become displaced. In 1855 appeared "The Statics of Pregnancy." This work contained certain deep researches into the natural philosophy of gestation. The section on the position of the fetus was a fine specimen of sound scientific work. With regard to the uterus, he held that, both in the horizontal and in the erect position of the woman, the pregnant uterus was in an oblique position. By this arrangement the uterus was preserved in a uniform condition free from many statical variations which might otherwise affect it suddenly and injuriously. Dr. Duncan also created a sensation in the anatomical and obstetrical world by the theories expressed in his "Pelvis studied with a View to Obstetrics." In this paper he demonstrated that the sacrum was not a wedge, nor was it the keystone of the so-called "pelvic arch." It was a strong transverse beam curved on its anterior surface, its two ends, the auricular surfaces, coming in contact with the corresponding parts of the iliac bones. From its position it could not, in Dr. Duncan's opinion, act as a wedge. In a series of "Papers on the Female Perineum" Dr. Duncan insisted that at first labors an inevitable posterior laceration of the vaginal orifice took place. He favored the practice of supporting the perineum in labor. He considered that laceration

¹ Published collectively, under that title, in 1879, after the author had settled in London. The other papers above mentioned may be found in Dr. Duncan's "Researches in Obstetrics" and "Contributions to the Mechanism of Natural and Morbid Parturition."

tion of the perineum was not, in any strict sense, a cause of prolapse or procidentia. It favored complete descent of the uterus, so that restoration of the perineum was useful to resist the progress of the descending uterus, but the operation did not remove the cause of displacement. In 1869 appeared a work which was perhaps the most characteristic production of his mind and pen. This was the famous "Practical Treatise on Perimetritis and Parametritis." We all know how he drew sharp pathological and diagnostic distinctions between the two diseases. His conclusions remain contested to the present day—indeed, his theories on gynecology were never so widely accepted as were his doctrines on pregnancy and labor. The work, however, won the admiration of its readers on account of the extreme clearness with which the author expressed his propositions and conclusions. It was the forerunner of his "Lectures on the Diseases of Women," compiled throughout in the same scientific and literary style. The most remarkable, though not the most characteristic, of Dr. Duncan's works was his "Fecundity, Fertility, and Sterility," which first appeared in 1866, and formed the basis of his Galstonian Lectures "On Sterility in Women," delivered in the Royal College of Physicians in 1883. This valuable publication was the fruit of very subtle researches into questions of age, sexual temperament, and other factors in relation to barrenness and the reverse condition. In 1870 Dr. Duncan brought out an essay "On the Mortality of Childbed and Maternity Hospitals."

In 1870 Sir James Simpson died, and a contest took place for the vacant chair of midwifery in the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Duncan, Dr. Keiller, and Dr. A. R. Simpson were candidates, and the opinion of the profession was strongly in favor of Dr. Duncan, but Dr. Simpson was the successful candidate. This election caused a great deal of stir at the time, and there can be little doubt that Dr. Duncan's disappointment was intense; nevertheless he continued to work for seven years longer in Edinburgh with unabated energy.

The British Empire is controlled by a race whose instincts are essentially averse to extreme centralization; nevertheless British talent nearly always gravitates to London. Dr. Matthews Duncan was drawn to the metropolis through the fame

of his reputation as a teacher, and also through his own inclination, for London was a new field for the indulgence of his favorite resource—the education of pupils. Dr. Greenhalgh retiring in 1877, Dr. Duncan was appointed in his stead Physician-Accoucheur and Lecturer on Midwifery to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, an institution with which is associated the largest medical school in London.¹ The peculiar system which prevails alone in the British capital is open to certain objections, but it greatly favors voluntary enterprise and individual action. Dr. Duncan took full advantage of his liberty. Not only did he teach in the wards with great energy, but, holding that the regulation course of systematic lectures on midwifery was insufficient, he increased their number, delivering a lecture on every week day in the summer session. In winter he gave a clinical lecture once a fortnight—the foundation of his famous "Lectures on the Diseases of Women," a work which has passed through several editions. His discourses proved highly popular and drew large audiences, partly composed of qualified men. His pupils soon began to distinguish themselves before boards of examiners, but the still greater good which he effected by instilling high principles of professional morality into the minds of his disciples was incalculable. Of his attitude in respect to operative gynecology more will be said presently, as it needs special consideration.

During his residence in London, which lasted from September, 1877, till his death, Dr. Duncan's private practice became large and fashionable. He attended H. R. H. the Duchess of Albany in her confinement. Notwithstanding his practice and his hospital duties, he found time to get through plenty of scientific work. He was an almost constant attendant at the meetings of the Obstetrical Society of London, of which he was president in 1881, and contributed yearly one or more memoirs. They mostly related to the physics of labor, and have appeared in abstract in this JOURNAL. Perhaps the most important were the exhaustive monographs on "Lupus of the Female Geuerative Organs." The author caused a fine

¹ There are eleven such schools, it must be remembered, attached to hospitals in London, exclusive of an institution for female students. They must not be confounded with the "faculty of medicine" at universities.

series of water colors to be prepared, taken from life; they illustrated the appearances of several varieties of disease which he classed together as "lupus." These drawings were presented to the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Dr. Matthews Duncan's health became greatly impaired during the early part of last spring. He suffered from gouty eczema and attacks of angina. He lectured on obstetrics as usual and with undiminished energy till the middle of June. Early in that month he spoke for the last time at the Obstetrical Society. At the end of June, however, he broke down completely and gave up all hospital work. A month later he went to Blankenberghe, a seaside resort in Belgium, where he enjoyed the company of Sir William Turner. His health improved and he bathed in the sea. Early in August he went on with his family to Baden-Baden. For long he believed that his symptoms were neurasthenic; but his father had died of heart disease, and now unmistakable signs of cardiac mischief set in. On August 17th, 18th, and 19th violent attacks of angina occurred, and edema of the lungs, albuminuria, and anasarca developed. Under the care of Dr. Gilbert, of Baden-Baden, and Dr. Aldren Turner he improved, the pulmonary and renal symptoms subsided after cupping, and it was decided to remove him to London on September 2d. At 5 o'clock on September 1st, however, he died suddenly when lying in bed comfortably supported by pillows.

The funeral took place on September 8th. The first part of the ceremony was held at St. Mark's Church, North Audley street, London, near the residence of the deceased in Brook street. The clergyman who officiated was the Rev. R. Borrodale Savory, rector of St. Bartholomew's the Greater, and son of the eminent surgeon. Notwithstanding the time of year—for London doctors take their annual holiday about this season—the church was crowded with members of the profession, including Sir William Savory, Sir Spencer Wells, Sir Crichton Browne, Dr. Quain, who represented the Queen, a large portion of Dr. Duncan's colleagues from St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and more than half the senior and junior obetetric physiciaus from the eleven medical schools in the British metropolis. There were besides a large number of

old pupils, English, Scotch, and Irish, and many doctors un-associated in any way with the deceased. The interment took place at a cemetery at East Finchley, to the north of London. The day was warm and bright.

Dr. Matthews Duncan died just upon the eve of his retirement from his hospital and teaching appointments. The instruction of his class was to him not so much a labor of love as an intense pleasure, and he certainly did not look forward to retirement with enthusiasm. The loss which his family and the profession have sustained is indeed irreparable. To his wife and children he was devotedly attached, and all must sympathize with them in their bereavement, sustained at a time when they were looking forward to days which he might have spent more freely in their company than during the period of his arduous though congenial academic duties. The profession, too, will sorely grudge the loss of many spare hours which he assuredly would have utilized for their benefit. As the writer of these lines can testify, no member of the profession, particularly of that branch with which this JOURNAL is concerned, could fail to be the better for the amount of medical knowledge, medical lore, and medical ethics which flowed from Dr. Matthews Duncan's lips in the course of an hour or two spent in his company.

Dr. Matthews Duncan will best be remembered as a teacher in the widest sense of the word, an educator of unqualified youths, and an instructor of his profession. Many men on the staff of medical schools have, of their own accord, devoted much more time to clinical teaching than was demanded by the regulations of the curriculum. Few, very few, however, have ever gone so far as Dr. Duncan, and of their own free will increased the number of systematic as well as clinical lectures required by the terms of their professorship. The natural result of his disinterested industry was the intense reverence with which his name was and is held by his pupils. None of us can fail to admire the energy with which he continued his self-imposed professional duties to the last, notwithstanding heavy professional work and severe physical exhaustion due to failing health.

Science must, we believe, most commend Dr. Matthews Duncan as an obstetrician. His skill in the lying-in chamber



Yours truly
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was well known. He was second to none of his compeers in doing all that is possible to maintain obstetrics as a science and at the same time as a profession suited for men of culture, refinement, and education. He thoroughly investigated the physics of pregnancy and labor. His contributions to literature on the subject of the position of the fetus are amongst the best evidences of his correct method of research. He experimented on the normal fetus out of the uterus, placing it in fluids of the same specific gravity as the liquor amnii, and found that it floated in such fluids in the same position as it naturally assumed in the uterus. When the fetus became decomposed it floated in a different manner, just as, under the same circumstances, it tended to lie in a different position in the uterine cavity. Thus Dr. Duncan trusted to direct experiment, instead of beginning by an assumption that a vital force in the uterine walls or some mechanical arrangement in the bony pelvis forced the fetus into the right position, and then setting to work to prove the assumption.

Dr. Matthews Duncan held that the obstetrician should devote himself to the treatment of pregnancy, labor, and the puerperium, undertaking at the same time the management of diseases of non-pregnant women as far as therapeutic aid would avail. He distrusted the practice of abdominal section by obstetricians. "Nobody can be a Sir Charles Locock and a Sir Spencer Wells at the same time," he would say; and he acted up to his convictions, although his most distinguished pupils have not all followed his example. This matter leads to another subject—Dr. Duncan's powers and opinions as a gynecologist. Most assuredly the profession in general never held him to be so recognized an authority in diseases of women as in obstetrics. He was none the less one of the soundest of pathologists and the best of clinical observers. His saying above quoted will clear away a great deal of misunderstanding; being a practical obstetrician, his bent was towards obstetrics. He never attempted "major" gynecology.¹ As to practical "minor" gynecology, he cannot be

¹ The arguments which he put forward in a paper entitled "Is Ovariectomy Justifiable or Not?" (*Lancet*, February, 1857) sound strange in the present day. They were then far from fallacious, for their end was the confutation of faulty arguments advanced by operators of small experience.

blamed for treating it with distrust when we bear in mind what the term implied in the days of his youth. We cannot be surprised if he occasionally overlooked what might be good when he had to deal with so much that was bad. It was inevitable that his training and surroundings must lead him to condemn operations which other good men practised on grounds which they deemed perfectly justifiable. This explains his aversion to trachelorrhaphy. Again, Dr. Duncan's peculiar views on gynecological ethics were the results of his instincts as a teacher. He considered that the student must first learn the nature of the parts with which he has to deal, and then acquire the art of detecting the diseases with which those parts are affected. This was his education, and when thus educated, and not till then, he could see an operation performed with profit; not till then was he competent to judge whether the operation was justifiable. Dr. Duncan strongly objected to a system which teaches the bare steps of major operations and justifies them on the score that a few experts can claim successful results. The student, however, is ever eager to see and hear of big surgery, and we all know that the teacher must cool such pernicious ardor and show him that he has many things to learn before he can profitably study and practise operations. Dr. Duncan constantly acted as the good teacher in this respect. The consequence was that many of his remarks which were meant for the classroom were sometimes taken as unjustifiable criticisms on operators of high experience. His real views on ovariectomy and allied operations may be better judged by the admiration which he often expressed for the work of his friend Dr. Keith. We must not harbor the impression that Dr. Matthews Duncan distrusted ovariectomists to the last because his system discouraged any ill-advised efforts to manufacture Wellses and Keiths.

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