

Obituary.

DR. R. MILNE MURRAY.

It is with feelings of the deepest regret that we record the death of Dr. R. Milne Murray, which occurred in Edinburgh on the 14th inst. For the last fifteen months he had been laid aside from active work through contracting a chill from which some pulmonary affection developed, but hopes were fondly cherished till the last that he would ultimately recover. These, alas, have been rudely shattered, and we now mourn the loss of one of our most eminent obstetricians, deplored not only by the Edinburgh School with which he was particularly connected, but by the country at large. Though but 48 years of age he had, by the application of science to obstetrics, made a reputation which reflected credit not only upon himself, but made him an ornament to the school in which he laboured and to which he belonged.

Robert Milne Murray was born at Fettercairn, Kincardineshire, the son of a gifted schoolmaster. From his father's school he went to St. Andrews, where he graduated M.A. in 1875. During his undergraduate career in this University he was the valued assistant of Dr. Heddle, professor of chemistry, which marked the early bent of his scientific instincts. After graduating in medicine at Edinburgh University, he became assistant to Sir J. Halliday Croom, which laid the foundation of his future obstetric career. During this time he supplemented practice by coaching in chemistry most successfully, and thus gained the experience in teaching which made him such a lucid and popular lecturer in midwifery and gynaecology in the Edinburgh School of Medicine, his classes being attended by large numbers of students.

To one of Dr. Murray's original mind and scientific genius obstetrics offered a far too limited scope, and, great as his attainments in this branch were, it was as an electrician, physicist, and physiologist that he particularly shone. There are few who were his superiors and collectively probably none his equal in these departments.

His electrical laboratory, in which the apparatus was almost all devised by himself, was one of the finest in the kingdom, and had been visited by scientists from all parts of the globe. In his application of these sciences to obstetrics the main value of Dr. Murray's work lay. Thus his experiments on the action of hot water on unstriped



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muscle placed on a scientific basis the particular benefit of hot water injections in post-partum hæmorrhage. In a similar way his scientific solution of the electrical treatment of fibroids at once raised this method from the depths of quackery with which it was too apt to be classed.

His scientific demonstrations of the physics of axis traction forceps have gone far to place the instrument in the foremost place it now holds. In this subject he was specially interested and, as if to show his keenness thereon to the last, a trenchant criticism by him on a review of this subject appeared in the *British Medical Journal* of February 6th.

His papers are numerous and varied, all are stamped with the accuracy and breadth of grasp of the true scientist.

He has been President of the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society, Vice-President of the British Gynæcological Society, and has held many other honorary positions. As Physician to the Maternity Hospital, Edinburgh, and assistant Gynæcologist to the Royal Infirmary, his teaching abilities were greatly prized and will be sadly missed.

Generous and unselfish almost to a fault, genial, unassuming and sympathetic, he was loved by all with whom he came in contact. His patients practically worshipped him, his associates revered and adored him. Busy as was his life, time was always his to bestow in assisting others when it was required. Of jealousy he knew nothing and seemed to have the special knack of seeing only the good points in the characters of others. For one of such strong character and outspoken independence it is strange to believe that he had no enemies, but such was so. Kindness and firmness, strength and gentleness seemed interwoven in one priceless fabric.

That such a beautiful and valuable life should thus early be removed from us cannot but make one halt and wonder at the strange mysteries of our destiny. But, while deeply mourning his loss, those who personally knew him cannot but be thankful for the stimulating influence of his life, his example, and his friendship.