

OBITUARY

ADAM BROWN KELLY, M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.F.P.S.

ON June 22nd, at Blythswood House, Helensburgh, whence he had recently retired after a long and useful career in Glasgow, Dr. Adam Brown Kelly, at the age of 76, passed on to a new life.

"A.B.K." as he was affectionately designated by many friends and colleagues, was the son of a well-known Glasgow practitioner. He graduated in 1888, and even in his undergraduate days he showed that keen interest in scientific research which he retained throughout his life. It was a passion he shared with his distinguished colleague, Dr. Albert Gray. Brown Kelly, in the field of Laryngology, and Albert Gray, in that of Otology, worked together for many years as pioneers of the Glasgow School, and each acquired an international reputation.

Shortly after qualifying, Brown Kelly turned his attention to laryngology, then rather an untilled field, and, after a period of study in Berlin and Vienna, the leading post-graduate centres of that day, he was appointed to the staff of the Victoria Infirmary of Glasgow, to which institution he gave loyal and arduous service for many years.

As might have been expected of one who possessed not only sound knowledge and manual dexterity, but also a most courteous manner and a charming and kindly presence, he rapidly acquired a large private practice; but he never allowed this to lure him from the path of scientific research.

In 1901 he received the degree of D.Sc.; in 1904, that of M.D., with honours, and in 1932, his University conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D. As a Fellow of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow he rendered good service by classifying and arranging the books on Oto-Laryngology in the Library of the Faculty, a task which must have given him great pleasure. Early in his career he became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine and for many years he was well known to members of the Section of Laryngology, as he frequently took part in the discussions, and in 1917 he occupied the Presidential Chair with great distinction. Many a journey to London did he undertake in order to attend the meetings. He was a good speaker, and his remarks were always clear, concise and constructive.

When the British Medical Association met in Nottingham in 1926, Brown Kelly was President of the Section of Oto-Laryngology, and he contributed to the discussions at many of the annual meetings of the B.M.A. The Scottish Society of Otology and Laryngology elected him their President on two occasions.

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As at home, so also abroad, was his merit recognized. He was a corresponding member of the American Laryngological Association and of similar Societies in Paris, Berlin and Vienna. When the International Medical Congress met in London he edited the Transactions of the Laryngological Section and in 1912 he represented Great Britain in an International Committee for the investigation of the problem of Ozoena, inaugurated by Professor Alexander of Berlin.

Although he published no book, he envisaged at one time the compilation of an Atlas of Laryngology, in which the laryngologists of the British Empire, and especially junior specialists, would describe and illustrate their rare or unusual cases. Brown Kelly was ever an inspiration to his juniors, urging them not to be content to be mere technicians, but to investigate each problem of practice and to publish the results for the benefit of other workers. The scope and value of medical artistry was one of his favourite themes, and it is of interest to note that his talented daughter has made many excellent illustrations of pathological interest and that her work in this field is highly appreciated.

Brown Kelly published many papers in various medical journals and he was a staunch supporter of the *Journal of Laryngology and Otology*. His writings were characterized by a meticulous accuracy and a conciseness of expression which suggested that every statement had been checked and every word carefully weighed.

The subjects covered a wide field and included Osteomyelitis of the Maxilla in Infants, Congenital Insufficiency of the Palate, Nasal Thermometry, Dangers of Antrum Puncture, Dermoid Polypi of the Pharynx and Nasopharynx, Congenital Teratoid Tumours of the Nasal Septum, Dental Cysts from a Rhinological Standpoint, Tortuosity of the Carotid Artery in relation to the Pharynx, and Aspergillosis of the Nose.

The above is no complete bibliography, which would serve no useful purpose, but it gives an idea of the widespread nature of his work. His chief interest, however, and the central point of all his researches, related to the Œsophagus, on which he was a recognized authority. The Semon Lecture of the University of London, which he delivered in 1926, dealt with Nervous Affections of the Œsophagus, and many who heard that lecture will now recollect the lucid exposition of an intricate problem. Along with his friend the late Dr. D. R. Paterson of Cardiff, he described that form of dysphagia in women associated with anæmia and a glossy pharyngeal mucosa, now generally known as the Plummer-Vinson syndrome.* Kelly was also one of the first to describe Congenital Shortening of

* "Spasm at the entrance to the Œsophagus" (A. Brown Kelly): *Journal of Laryngology*, xxxiv, August, 1919, 285.

"A Clinical Type of Dysphagia" (D. R. Paterson): *ibid.*

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the Œsophagus, and to clear up the confusion which has existed in regard to the condition termed "Cardiospasm". He also described the varieties of congenital abnormalities associated with the cesophagus, this being the subject of his address at the Opening of the Post-Graduate School of the Central London Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital in October, 1935.

All this record of his scientific and literary achievement is as nothing compared with the genuine worth of the man himself, for Brown Kelly was indeed a delightful person. Shy and modest to a degree, he would give way to his colleagues almost too readily, and as he never sought office, the honours bestowed on him were all the more meritorious. His sincere kindness of heart endeared him to all, patients, friends and colleagues alike, and those who were privileged to enjoy the hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Brown Kelly in their house at Blythswood Square, know how gladly it was given and how highly it was appreciated. To his widow, and to his son and daughter, our sympathy and thoughts are to-day directed. Dr. Derek Brown Kelly, at present serving in the Navy, is following his father as a laryngologist and has already been appointed to the staff of the same hospital. "A.B.K." is gone, but we shall meet him again. The bitterness of parting, though hard to bear, is not unending, for death cannot cheat us of eternity.

D.G.