

The late Dr Alexander Bruce, Edinburgh. By Dr J. H.
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By the death of Alexander Bruce, M.A., M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.P.E., F.R.S.E., of 8 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh, on June 4th, at the comparatively early age of fifty-six, the Edinburgh Medical School has lost one of its most prominent teachers, and Great Britain one of her most brilliant investigators in the domain of diseases of the nervous system. Born in East Aberdeenshire in 1854, Dr Bruce received his early education in Aberdeen. Entering Aberdeen University as first bursar at the early age of sixteen, he had a distinguished career in the Faculty of Arts, graduating with first-class honours in classics, and gaining the Simpson Prize for Greek, the Seafield Medal in Latin, and the Town Council gold medal as the best student of his year. He then proceeded to Edinburgh University, where he had an equally brilliant undergraduate medical career, gaining, amongst other awards, the Leckie-MacTier Fellowship, and again carrying off the blue ribbon of his year, in the shape of the Ettles Scholarship, when he graduated M.B., C.M., with first-class honours, in 1879. Subsequent to graduation he held resident posts in the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and at West Riding Asylum, Yorkshire, and studied abroad for a period at Paris, Frankfort, Heidelberg, and Vienna. Returning to Edinburgh, he acted for a time as assistant to the late Dr Argyll Robertson, but soon gave up this post to devote his energies to a growing general practice, and to original research in what was to become his life's work—the structure and diseases of the nervous system. A firm believer in a thorough knowledge of pathology as a basis for medical research, he taught pathology for a time in the extra-mural medical school, and acted as pathologist successively to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, the Royal Infirmary, and the Longmore Hospital for Incurables. Later he relinquished the teaching of pathology for that of the practice of medicine, and at the time of his death was one of the physicians and lecturers on clinical medicine in the Royal Infirmary. Some ten years ago he gave up general practice and restricted himself to consulting work, more particularly in connection with nervous diseases, in which branch of medical science he was by this time a well-known authority, and soon acquired wide recognition as a consultant. An indefatigable worker, he

found time, in addition to the cares of teaching and practice, for original research, the results of which are embodied in many contributions to medical literature. Of his more important works may be mentioned *Illustrations of the Mid and Hind Brain*, a work which was an elaboration of his M.D. thesis for which he received a University gold medal, and which was for many years a standard work of reference on the anatomy of that part of the brain; his *Topographical Atlas of the Spinal Cord*; and the paper entitled "Distribution of the Cells in the Intermedio-lateral Tract of the Spinal Cord," published in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and for which he was awarded the Keith Prize by the Society in 1907. In 1903 he founded, and has since edited, the *Review of Neurology and Psychiatry*, a monthly journal devoted to nervous and mental diseases which now has a wide circulation both in this country and abroad. Dr Bruce was an excellent linguist and a frequent attendee at the meetings of various medical societies and congresses. He had the distinction of being a corresponding member of the Neurological Society of Paris, and he had translated from German Thoma's *Manual of Pathology*, and shortly before his death had just published in two large volumes a translation of Oppenheim's celebrated *Text-book of Nervous Diseases*. Amongst other honours it may be mentioned that he was an original member of the Neurological Society of the United Kingdom and was on the editorial staff of its magazine, *Brain*; that some years ago he was the Morrison Lecturer at the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh; and that in 1909 the University of Aberdeen conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D. in recognition of his eminence as a teacher, physician, and scientist. To his patients, both in hospital and in private, he was ever the beloved physician; his services were much in demand, and to all he gave of his best ungrudgingly. Many of his patients were of the type to whom the personal element in the physician is everything, and there can be little doubt that the constant strain of his practice, combined with so much teaching and literary work, was responsible for his untimely break-down and death. As a colleague he enjoyed the highest respect of his professional brethren; and to those who were privileged to know him intimately there was revealed, in addition to his uprightness of character and general charm of manner, a great depth of quiet humour and a tenderness which greatly endeared him and made his loss deeply felt.