

bottle, till at the close he, with a sad smile, said, "Gentlemen, the failure of this experiment proves more than its success!"

The bent of Christison's mind was scientific and positive rather than philosophic, speculative, or presaging. He was more occupied with what is, than with why it is, or what it may become, and in this region he did his proper work excellently, with a clear decision and thoroughness.

He had the natural qualities of a great soldier, and was full of martial ardour and sense. He has sometimes been called distant and cold. He had great natural dignity, and was not of an effusive turn, being warmer inside than out, which is better than the reverse; but that he had tender and deep feelings, as well as strong energy and will, the following circumstance may well show. It refers to what, if said in his lifetime, would have brought a flush of displeasure on that noble face. His wife, a woman of great beauty, and better, was in her last long illness. She was going to the country for a month, and her husband heard her give orders that a piece of worsted work which she had finished should be *grounded* and made up as an ottoman, and ready in the drawing-room on her return. A few days before that, he asked if it was completed; it had been totally forgotten. He said nothing; but, getting possession of the piece, he sat up for two or three nights and *grounded* it with his own hand, had it made up, and set his wife down on it, as she had wished. Is not that beautiful?—a true, manly tenderness, worth much and worth remembering: "Out of the strong comes forth sweetness." His love of Nature, from her flowers to her precipices and mountains, and his pursuit of her into her wildest fastnesses, "haunted him like a passion," increasing with his years. His Highland residences during the latter part of his life gave him great delight, and fed his intrepid, keen, searching spirit. He never saw a big mountain but he heard it, as it were, saying to him, "Come on—and up;" and on and up he went, scaling the tragic *Cobbler* and many else. He had a genius for nice handiwork, and took pains with everything he did. The beauty and minuteness of his penmanship we all know; he might, as Thackeray said of himself, have turned an honest penny by writing the Lord's Prayer on the size of a sixpence.

But we must end, though half has not been said. We, his old friends, can never forget him, or hope ever to see his like again.

J. B.

DR JAMES BALFOUR KIRK OF BATHGATE.

THE name of Kirk of Bathgate is one of the most familiar and respected in the long roll of country medical men, who do what is often wrongly called the rough work of the profession in the gentlest way, and who often unite the amount of experience and knowledge which in the large towns is distributed over many specialists. The country man has to be physician, surgeon, and

obstetrician at once, and often does the threefold work for one-third of the pay enjoyed by his town brother.

James Balfour Kirk was born on the 6th of December 1826 at Cairneyhill, near Dunfermline, and, after a boyhood of hard work and many difficulties nobly overcome, graduated in 1847 as M.D. Edinburgh, when not yet 21 years of age, and next day, with very few pounds in his pocket, married Miss Jessie Arthur, eldest daughter of the late Mr John Arthur, who was for so many years the trusted assistant of the late Professor Goodsir. All who knew Dr Kirk knew what a wise and fortunate marriage it was, and what a happy home he had for five-and-thirty years.

After a year at Lanark Dr Kirk settled at Bathgate; in 1851 was appointed Medical Officer to the Parochial Board, and has ever since been one of the chief figures, not only in the town, but in the whole country side. Of commanding presence, bold, honest, and outspoken, a most loving friend, and most considerate, attentive, and truly courteous practitioner, it is no wonder that he was loved and trusted, and that his funeral was said to be the largest ever seen in Bathgate. Oddities and brusqueries of speech and manner he had, but of affectation, humbug, or hypocrisy he was absolutely free. Simple as a child, with a child's love of fun and laughter, he had the warmest heart, and was in every sense of the word one of the ablest and readiest practitioners we have ever met.

Few cases puzzled him, and no difficulty or emergency was too much for him. One was sure that if a telegram came from Kirk it was not for nonsense, and there was sure to be an operation, probably a difficult and uncommon one, else he would have done it himself, and done it well, too—for his immense physical strength did not prevent him from being exact and accurate in his work. He was a splendid assistant, and a most fearless and admirable chloroformist. One remarkable faculty he had in perfection—absolute control over his patients. They delivered themselves absolutely into his hands, and what he advised to be done, was done without a murmur.

He had a very large and exhausting practice, and never spared himself. About twelve years ago he very nearly died of intra-pelvic suppuration, complicated with most alarming cerebral and cardiac symptoms. The suppuration recurred occasionally, but with less severity. About a fortnight before his death he had been overworked, but stuck to his post till, when he last left his carriage, he could hardly walk to his room. Abscesses in ischio-rectal fossa, attended with intense pain, constant vomiting, and eventually culminating in an attack of jaundice, ended in his death on Sunday morning, the 5th of February. He was buried on Thursday the 9th.

Dr Kirk is survived by his widow, one daughter, and three sons,—the eldest of whom, Dr Robert Kirk, will succeed him in his practice.
