

## OBITUARY

JOHN ORR, M.D., F.R.C.P.E.

DR JOHN ORR died in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh on 28th November 1949, after a short illness.

His life was a very full one for he had varied gifts and abilities not one of which rusted in him unused.

I met him for the first time in Calcutta in 1934. He was then visiting, on his own initiative, the medical schools and institutions of India, enlarging his experience and knowledge of medical education and administration. As I was then myself actively engaged in teaching and administration, it was a great pleasure to meet and talk over these important matters with one so experienced and knowledgeable. When I returned to Edinburgh in 1935 as Medical Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary I was delighted to find Dr Orr one of the Managers and for the next fifteen years I enjoyed the pleasure of intimate personal fellowship with one who, alike in professional and outside interests, was keen, alert and enthusiastic and who could communicate his enthusiasm and interest to others.

His great life's interest was his profession. He was a well trained and experienced, logical and disciplined physician, expert and shrewd, definite in diagnosis and in the practical application of his knowledge. Having studied and thought over a case, he had then surety in his diagnosis and high confidence in his treatment. This confidence he was able to communicate to his patient, a great gift in any doctor.

After his retiral from practice about twenty years ago his main interests were in the School of Medicine of the Royal Colleges and in the Royal Infirmary. He took over the Deanship of the School at no easy time. His belief in the School's worth, his hard work and confidence, and sympathetic administration successfully carried on the School until he was able to hand it over to an able successor.

He served as a Manager of the Royal Infirmary for over twenty years and every year was one of increasing interest and service. I have personally to thank him for much help and guidance willingly given. He quickly grasped the essentials of any problem and was sure to discover a likely solution. The Infirmary owes him a particular debt for his work as Convener of the Radiological Committee. He studied the various problems of the Department until he had an intimate, clear and detailed knowledge of its present and future needs in equipment and staff. He was able by his logical and forceful and persuasive presentation of his problems to carry his schemes through committee and the Board with unusual speed and celerity. He was a shining example of what the voluntary principle could achieve given interest and enthusiasm in its Board members.

But he got much enjoyment from the exercise of his gifts in directions other than medical. Chief, perhaps, was his interest in music. He had a high appreciation of good music; he had a good bass voice and entertained many a company with his singing of Scots songs. He was a Director of the Edinburgh Concert Society and for many years was its Chairman. His business acumen

and talent for negotiation bore good fruit here, and concert-goers in Edinburgh have much to thank him for. At the concert of the Scottish Orchestra on 8th December 1949 the large audience paid thankful tribute to his work and his memory, while the orchestra played Elgar's noble Nimrod Enigma Variations.

He was a Watson's boy and kept up his affection for the College to the end, serving two terms of office as President of the Watsonian Club. He was a keen and expert bowler, and skipped many a winning team in club and international games. He loved Scotland and knew it well, especially the Highland country in and around Speyside. A cultured student of literature, in conversation and speech he could quote readily and aptly from his wide store and knowledge of English and classical literature.

But those who knew John Orr intimately and shared his friendship will remember him more for his personal qualities. He was by nature cheerful and kindly, understanding and sympathetic and ever ready to help not only with advice but with real practical help—Christian virtues these might be called, and rightly so. Throughout his life these were reinforced by his simple religious faith, practised quietly and serenely and confidently, and never with ostentation.

His going is a loss but his memory and influence remain. A fine life well lived.

A. D. S.

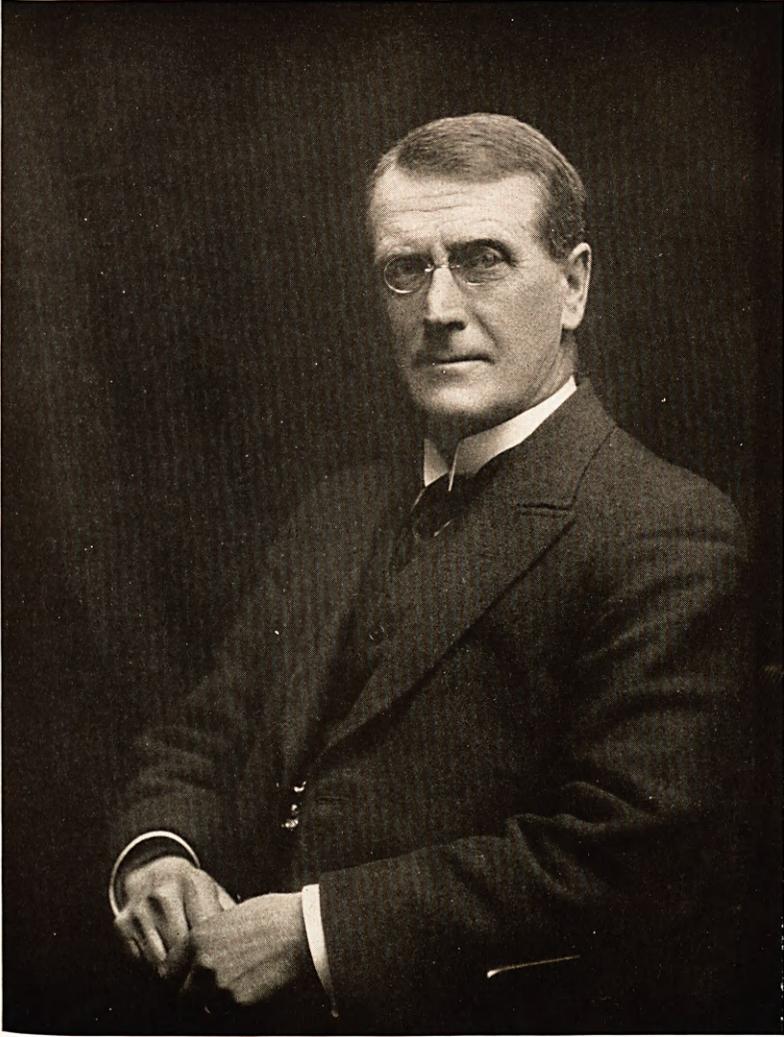
John Orr, born in Edinburgh on 5th September 1870, was the son of Samuel Kelyt Orr, a business man. Educated at George Watson's College and at Edinburgh University, he graduated M.B., C.M. with honours in 1891 and the same year qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.Lond. In the winter of 1891-2 he acted as resident physician to Sir James Affleck and later was resident at Chalmers Hospital and at the Simpson Memorial Hospital. Joining the Royal Medical Society in 1891 he was elected Senior President in 1894. He became a member of the Royal College of Physicians in 1894 and two years later proceeded to the Fellowship and took the M.D.

Attracted to general practice, John Orr became first an assistant in Edinburgh and then a successful principal. His special flair for teaching found outlet as physician to the Western Dispensary and later as lecturer in *Materia Medica* in the School of the Royal Colleges.

From 1924 to 1945 Dr Orr acted as Dean of the extra-mural school and during his term of office made trips to India, Canada and the United States to study problems of medical education. He served on the Council of the Royal College of Physicians from 1926 to 1930 and as representative of the College on the Board of Management for the Triple Qualification for many years. From 1926 until the introduction of the Health Service he was a member of the Board of Managers of the Royal Infirmary, an office which gave ample scope for his special qualities of mind and body.

In spite of his 80 years, Dr Orr remained active and vigorous and almost to the end of his last illness continued to look forward to further activities.

To his widow and family we extend our deepest sympathy.



*Photo by*

JOHN ORR

*E. R. Yerbury*