[To face page 147.]

FROM THE PORTRAIT BY GERALD F. KELLY, R.A.

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IN MEMORIAM

GEORGE FREDERIC STILL, 1868-1941

In many of our older schools and colleges there is in daily use a bidding prayer which commemorates the Founder : and it is fitting that a like commemoration should be made to one who, if not the Founder, was an ardent supporter and tireless worker in the earlier and more troubled days of 'The Archives of Disease in Childhood', and gave unstinted service as Chairman of its Editorial Committee from its birth until quite recently, using his influence and his ideals in the promotion of a scientific publication in this special branch of medicine. It is therefore in the words of the bidding prayer 'fitting and our bounden duty' to celebrate his memory.

George Frederic Still was born in 1868, a Londoner of a family of that middle class from which so many of her finest citizens have sprung. He was educated at Merchant Taylors', whence he proceeded to Caius College, Cambridge, as a classical scholar. At Cambridge he won distinction as a classic and took his degree in the Classical Tripos with first-class honours, and passed on to a career in medicine. From Cambridge he went to Guy's Hospital and there came under the influence of James Goodhart, to whose teaching and example he owed in some part his inclination towards the study of disease in children. In 1894 while still at Guy's he won the Murchison Scholarship, awarded after examination in clinical medicine by the University of Edinburgh and the Royal College of Physicians of London in alternate years. From Guy's, following his bent, he became House Physician at The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, and began a connexion which lasted for more than thirty years. In his earlier years there he produced two pieces of work which established his reputation as a scientific observer ; his thesis for the Cambridge M.D. degree on 'A special form of joint disease met with in children,' an accurate clinical and pathological account of what has become widely known as 'Still's disease' (his original article is reprinted elsewhere in this issue) : and the identification of the organism responsible for the affection described clinically many years previously by Gee and Barlow as posterior basic meningitis. After some years of fruitful work as medical registrar in the wards and laboratories of Great Ormond Street, Still was elected to the staff, and in the same year was appointed Physician for Diseases of Children at King's College Hospital, the first of the general hospitals of London to establish a special department in this branch of medicine. Seven years later he became the Professor of the Diseases of Children at King's College, the first man to whom that title was granted in the United Kingdom. In the meantime Still had been steadily adding to his reputation by his writings. He had

collaborated with Goodhart in the later editions of that physician's successful text-book on the diseases of children, and afterwards produced more than one edition unaided. At the same time he was publishing on his own account articles, papers and lectures, nearly all on the clinical or pathological aspects of disease; and many of these have a permanent value, for he was an acute and accurate observer. In 1909 he published in his own name 'Common Disorders and Diseases of Childhood' a work which embodied much of his own first-hand experience, made possible by his habit of maintaining and constantly analysing elaborate notes of all his clinical cases, both in hospital and private work. This book is in the opinion of many good judges the best and most trustworthy guide to clinical paediatrics yet published. By this time Still was beginning to enter upon a period of busy and lucrative private practice as a consultant, and in the ensuing years he became so much the recognized authority that it was difficult to find any child of the more educated and wealthier class of the community who had not at some time been taken to see him. Yet busy as he was he always, like all true physicians, freely and generously gave his services to many who could not afford a consultant's fees. In this round of busy practice and busy authorship Still never neglected his hospital work, either, needless to say, the work of the wards and out-patient rooms which lay nearest to his heart, or that less attractive but essential business of committee work, and the organization of teaching at both his hospitals. At King's he was for three years the Chairman of the Medical Committee, and those who know what the work of the Medical Committee of a teaching hospital implies will realize how great a burden such an office brings in expenditure of time and energy. Moreover, he shouldered willingly and in his usual thorough fashion activities in connexion with Dr. Barnardo's Homes, with the Society for Waifs and Strays and the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality. Of this he was Chairman for twenty years, and it owed much to him. In 1926 he reached the period of retirement from the active Staff at Great Ormond Street and became Consulting Physician, and in 1934 he became Emeritus Professor at King's. In 1933 the International Paediatric Congress met in London and Still was naturally its President. The President of the Congress was generally recognized not only as a famous and honoured physician, but revealed even to his own profession in this country an hitherto unsuspected geniality of address, and a happy turn of public speaking. His reputation was at its height and the knighthood and appointment as Physician Extraordinary to the King were a recognition of his pre-eminence.

Such in brief outline and with many omissions was the public career of this distinguished physician. To enumerate in detail the honours which fell to his lot whether at the Royal College of Physicians or in the Academies and Societies of the medical world, would be to compile a somewhat featureless catalogue. Rather would it seem better to attempt to set down some of the characteristics which marked the man. In his earlier years in the profession he was so absorbed in his work and so anxious, in Kipling's phrase, 'to fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run', that he often gave the impression to his contemporaries that he

was unused to, and careless of, the courtesies and amenities of ordinary social life ; an impression which even in those laborious days was at once corrected when one came into closer contact with him. Yet even if for a few minutes he relaxed he would quickly recollect himself, as if he heard ' Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near ', and the momentary glimpse of his scholarly and genial spirit was lost in the business of the hour. He was then no lover of sports, but in his later years became, somewhat to the amazement and amusement of his friends, an ardent, but, as he himself owned, an inefficient dry-fly fisherman. He would at that time, I imagine, have justified his addiction by the example of gentle Izaak Walton, but after some years lost his enthusiasm for the sport. He never, so far as I know, acknowledged the cause of the change, but more than once it appeared from sundry hints and allusions that it was due to an increasing unwillingness to take life in any form. That is often a factor in the abandonment of shooting in men of increasing age, but is rare among the haunters of the Test or Itchen. His social gifts were seen at their best in the gatherings of the College Club. In that congenial atmosphere among men who knew him well and whom he knew well he expanded and revealed a capacity to enjoy the fleeting hour of relaxation which he seldom showed in everyday life. The classical learning of his earlier days remained fully alive, and his reading was by preference in the older authors, Greek, Latin and English. He was in the habit for many years of expressing his thoughts in verse and some years ago published privately a slim volume of his poetry. This with some added pages he re-edited, and it was published a few weeks before his death. It is the ' parergon ' of an accomplished scholar rather than the inspired utterance of a poet, but it exhibits another side of his mind, the delight which he found in expressing his thoughts within the constraint of an ordered rhythm in carefully studied grace of language.

I cannot end this brief attempt to illustrate his memory better than by quoting the Greek epitaph * written by a modern scholar in memory of another ' blameless physician ' : lines which Still with his love of Greek brevity and eloquence would have appreciated and cherished.

*Χαῖρε θάνων, αἰὼν' ἀνύσας ἰσόμοιρον ἐπαίνῳ,
ἐνθάδε μὲν κλαυτὸς, τοῖς δ' ἐκεῖ ἀσπάσιος·
σώμασιν ὃς θνητῶν ἔζης ἰατρὸς ἀμύμων,
πιστὸς τῷ Ψυχῶν πῆματ' Ἰαομένῳ.*

The ' blameless healer ' of children's ills has passed from among us full of ' Faith in the Supreme Healer of Souls '.

HUGH THURSFIELD, D.M., F.R.C.P.

* A real translation of this epigram is beyond my powers, so packed is it with the Greek genius for the expression of much in the fewest possible words, and in the most allusive phrase.

' Hail, dead friend, who hast run thy course with honour thy constant companion: mourned by us here: welcome to those above: thou didst live a blameless healer of the bodies of mortal men, filled with faith in Him who heals the sins of souls.'