OBITUARY.

EDWARD PIERSON ELLIOT, M. D.

Dr. Elliot, first assistant physician to the Danvers Lunatic Hospital, died January 11, 1897, after a short illness.

He was born March 1, 1856, in Boston, but his parents soon afterward removed to Somerville, Mass., where his early life was spent. From childhood he showed a remarkable capacity for the acquisition of knowledge. In school he amused himself by keeping up with the work of classes in advance of his own by listening to their recitations, and was thus able to enter the high school at the age of eleven, and Harvard University at fifteen. He easily took high rank as a scholar in his college course, graduating in 1875. At the time of graduating he had no thought of studying medicine, but engaged first in business, and then for a few months in teaching. In 1877 Dr. William B. Hills, associate professor of chemistry in the Harvard Medical School, urged him to study medicine, and offered him the opportunity of defraying the expenses of the course by assisting in the chemical laboratory. In the medical school, as elsewhere, he impressed all with whom he came in contact with his remarkable ability. Graduating in 1881, he obtained an appointment at the Boston City Hospital, remaining there several months beyond the regular term of two years, at the request of the staff. Dr. Philip Coombs Knapp, who was associated with him in the hospital service, states that at that time he showed an unusual acquaintance with nervous diseases.

After leaving the hospital Dr. Elliot went to Europe for study, spending two years in the medical schools of Berlin and Vienna. He then accepted an opportunity to engage in a notable yacht cruise, visiting Japan, Java, the Pacific Coast of this country, and the West Indies. Immediately on his return, in 1886, he was invited by Dr. W. A. Gorton, newly appointed superintendent of the Danvers Lunatic Hospital, to take the position made vacant by his own promotion, and entered upon his lifework. Of his characteristics and work at that time Dr. Gorton writes as follows:

"It was most evident to all who were associated with him, as they grew to know him better, that Dr. Elliot was a man of rare intellectual gifts, highly developed by close and accurate study, and by careful and systematic culture. He was, from the first, painstaking and conscientious in his clinical work, and displayed a

very great capacity for its performance. He was also an indefatigable student, familiarizing himself with the literature of psychiatry in all tongues. That is to say, he read with ease French, German, and Italian, and made himself master of nearly everything written on mental disease in those languages.

"However, so great was his modesty that he seldom or never obtruded his knowledge upon those less well-informed than himself, but was always ready to put it at their service when requested so to do. Nor was his reading confined to medical literature. He read widely in the field of history, literature, and science. One seldom meets a man with so great a capacity for reading and such power to assimilate what he read as Dr. Elliot possessed."

My own acquaintance with Dr. Elliot began in the spring of 1895. He early impressed me as a remarkable man. Of unusually prepossessing features, with extensive and thorough professional knowledge, unusual general information, refined taste, and a mind cultivated, not only by extensive reading and study, but wide observation of men and things, he was the most unobtrusive of men, not from any lack of confidence in his own judgment—he was always ready, on occasion, to express and defend his own opinions—but rather from a self-sufficiency, which held him far above vanity, and a distaste for all that savored of ostentation. It was, I think, partly this, and partly a somewhat indolent natural disposition, increased of late years by poor health, that led to the disappointment of the hopes and expectations of those who knew him in regard to his contributions to medical literature. He had unusual powers of expression—his notes of cases are often models of acute observation and concise and graphic statement—but he had nothing of the *cacoethes scribendi*, or of the love of notoriety which inflicts such masses of crude, inaccurate observation and slovenly writing upon a more or less patient profession.

Personally, Dr. Elliot was, by nature and training, a gentleman. He was of reserved disposition, and disposed to let people find their happiness in their own way, but I do not remember ever to have seen him lose his temper, and his somewhat caustic wit was never used with the intention of giving pain to its objects. If he was not delivered from envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, he was preserved from their display. His talents commanded the admiration of all who knew him; his kindness and tact won for him the affection of the unfortunates committed to his care.

W. L. WORCESTER.