

In Memoriam.

ARTHUR VERNON MACAN,
KNIGHT BACHELOR, B.A., M.B., M.CH., M.A.O., UNIV. DUBL.;
KING'S PROFESSOR OF MIDWIFERY IN THE SCHOOL OF PHYSIC
IN IRELAND;
OBSTETRIC PHYSICIAN TO SIR PATRICK DUN'S HOSPITAL, DUBLIN;
PAST PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
OF IRELAND:

WITH very deep regret and a keen sense of personal loss we record the lamented death on Saturday, September 26, 1908, of ARTHUR VERNON MACAN. The sad event took place at his residence, 53 Merrion Square, Dublin, and was brought about by heart failure after a series of attacks of angina pectoris. The first symptoms of his fatal illness showed themselves one morning towards the close of last July, when SIR ARTHUR was attacked in the course of an early bicycle ride by sudden breathlessness and anginal pain. He died in his sleep.

Born on January 30, 1843, ARTHUR VERNON MACAN had nearly completed his sixty-sixth year at the time of his death. He was the eldest son of the Hon. John Macan, Q.C., First Commissioner of Bankruptcy in the High Court of Justice in Ireland. Three surviving younger brothers are Jameson John Macan, M.D. Cantab., of Cheam, Surrey, Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the British Empire*; Reginald Walter Macan, D.Litt., Master of University College, Oxford, and University Reader in Ancient History; and Francis William Macan.

ARTHUR MACAN was educated at St. Columba's College and in Trinity College, Dublin. Graduating in the University of Dublin in Arts in 1864, and in Medicine and Surgery in 1868, he shortly afterwards went to Berlin and Vienna, in which capitals he spent some years in the study of midwifery and gynaecology. His prolonged sojourn in Germany and

In Memoriam.

Austria made him an accomplished German scholar, so that he was chosen to translate Professor A. Heller's article on "Intestinal Parasites" in von Ziemssen's Encyclopædia of Medicine for the seventh volume of the English edition of that great work. Throughout his professional career, also, his intimate knowledge of the German language enabled him to keep in touch with every advance in obstetrics and gynæcology achieved in the great schools of Berlin and Vienna. On his return to Dublin he became a leading spirit among a number of young specialists who were known to the older school as "the German Band."

In 1877, ARTHUR MACAN married Miss Mary Agnes Wanklyn, second daughter of John Bradshaw Wanklyn, Esq., of Cheam, Surrey, and commenced private practice in Lower Baggot Street, Dublin. In 1878 he was appointed Lecturer on Midwifery in the Carmichael School (afterwards College) of Medicine, in succession to Dr. Wensley Bond Jennings. This appointment he continued to hold until 1889, when he became King's Professor of Midwifery in the School of Physic in Ireland, on the occasion of the death of Sir Edward Sinclair. He was also, in the early years of his professional career, gynæcologist to the City of Dublin Hospital—and this appointment he filled with conspicuous ability and success until his election as Master of the Rotunda Lying-in Hospital in 1882, in succession to Dr. Lombe Atthill. His Mastership lasted seven years, in accordance with custom, and he was succeeded in that coveted position in November, 1889, by Dr. (now Sir) William J. Smyly. To these three men—Atthill, Macan and Smyly—the women of Ireland and of the Empire owe an untold debt of gratitude for the introduction into midwifery practice of antiseptic, but—better and surer still—aseptic, methods. This great reformation began in Dr. Atthill's Mastership of the Rotunda, when MACAN was for three years Assistant Physician to that renowned institution. To MACAN in particular, also, is due the improvement in the nursing system of the Rotunda Hospital, which has played such a striking part in lowering the puerperal morbidity and mortality to a vanishing point.

In 1887, MACAN reported, to the Section of Obstetrics in the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, a case of vaginal

In Memoriam.

extirpation of the uterus after the method adopted by Dr. A. Martin, of Berlin. With characteristic honesty and candour he added the words "in which both ureters were tied" to the title of his paper (*Transactions of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland*, Vol. VI., 1888, page 230). The case, as there reported, is an excellent object lesson for all obstetric surgeons to read, learn, and inwardly digest. Another notable contribution was made by SIR ARTHUR to the Section of Obstetrics on January 31, 1890, when he detailed a case of successful Cæsarean Section, the first recorded in the annals of Irish surgery.

These were only two of very numerous communications to the literature of the special branch of Medicine to which MACAN devoted his life, and which he so nobly practised. Even in the last Session of the Royal Academy of Medicine he contributed on three occasions to the work of the Section of Obstetrics. A paper read by him before that Section on March 13th of the present year appears in the current number of this Journal. The talented author had consented to its publication in our pages, provided it did not appear until after it had been published in another Medical Journal, to the Editor of which he had promised it. Hence the delay and its posthumous publication. His very latest communication was made to the Section of Obstetrics at the last meeting of the recent Session, on May 29, 1908, when he submitted and described a specimen of ectopic gestation, with ovarian cyst. Thus he may well be described as having died in harness.

On St. Luke's Day, October 18, 1877, MACAN was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Three years later he was elected Censor, a post which he filled for two years, and again in the years 1890-1892. On St. Luke's Day, 1902, he became President of the College, and in the following year he received the honour of Knighthood from His Majesty the King as a compliment to his College and in recognition of his high professional standing and attainments.

From 1889 to the time of his death, MACAN was King's Professor of Midwifery in the School of Physic in Ireland, Trinity College, Dublin. This appointment carried with it the further post of Obstetric Physician to Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin.

In Memoriam.

At the annual meeting of the British Medical Association held in Dublin in 1887, MACAN was President of the Obstetric Section, and in 1890 he served as Honorary President of the Obstetrical Section of the International Medical Congress, which met in that year at Berlin. He also filled the office of President of the British Gynæcological Society, and for the usual term acted as Extern Examiner in Midwifery in the University of Oxford.

We have shown thus briefly what a distinguished position the subject of this memoir occupied in his profession.

The Dublin Correspondent of *The British Medical Journal* wrote as follows in the issue of that periodical for October 3, 1908 :—" The death of SIR ARTHUR MACAN removes a striking figure from the Dublin School of Obstetrics. He had a forcible character, with a rather uncompromising manner, which made him appear impatient of opposition or contradiction. But, as often happens, his brusqueness really covered a very generous and kindly disposition, and the many who knew that side of him deeply mourn his death, at once for the loss of a beloved friend and of a distinguished teacher in the profession."

In the same number of *The British Medical Journal* a very full and appreciative memoir of SIR ARTHUR MACAN appeared from the pen—it is an open secret—of his friend, Dr. James Craig.

From it we cull the following paragraphs :—

" ARTHUR MACAN's outlook on life and on passing events was that of a radical and a logician. His sympathies were on the side of reform and the relief of those he considered to be downtrodden. One of his ideals was to carry logic into religion, politics, and medicine. This may be a difficult matter to accomplish, but to attempt it, even, proves a man to be a trifle apart from the common herd. MACAN formed strong convictions, and it required reasoning on logical lines to break through his defences, but when the reasoning was convincing he yielded the point at issue with a good grace.

" His loss to Dublin will be much felt, and universal sympathy will be extended to his relatives, particularly to his two sons and three daughters, who have lost a kind and indulgent father.

In Memoriam.

“The funeral took place on Tuesday, September 29th, when the President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians assembled to pay a last tribute of respect to their former President, and the President and Council of the Royal College of Surgeons and many representatives of other professions were included in the mourners.”

So closed the grave over all that was mortal of one to whom the writer was indebted for many an act of kindness through many a year. With pious hands he lays a wreath upon the tomb of one whom he regarded more as a brother than a friend—

“Manibus date lilia plenis.”

J. W. M
