

In Memoriam

TIMOTHY MAURICE HEALY, M.B., F.R.C.P.I., F.R.C.O.G.,

(Obit 28th January, 1958).

By the death of "Tim" Healy, Dublin has to mourn the passing of an outstanding obstetrician and a great gentleman. Graduating M.B. (N.U.I.) in 1921, he devoted himself from the outset to the study of obstetrics, and after a period of postgraduate study in Dublin and Vienna became assistant to the late LOUIS CASSIDY, then Master of the Coombe Lying-in Hospital in Dublin. In 1927 he took his Membership of the R.C.P.I., and was elected a Fellow of that College in the following year. On the tragic death of Cassidy in the hunting field late in the autumn of 1928, Healy succeeded him as Master of the Hospital in December. He thus became the youngest Master to have held such appointment—he was not yet 30 years of age.

When the College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists was established, he accepted the Foundation Membership, and from 1929 to 1931 represented the Irish Members on the Council of the College; on his resignation from the Council, by reason of his duties at the Hospital, he was elected to its Fellowship.

In 1935, his term of Mastership coming to a close, he was appointed Visiting Gynaecologist to the then Richmond Hospital, here succeeding a former Master of the Coombe, MICHAEL GIBSON; as a member of the Board of Governors of the Coombe Hospital and as Consulting Gynaecologist to St. Anne's Hospital, he held these appointments until death. He had also been an Extramural Examiner in Obstetrics for both Colleges, those of the National and Dublin Universities.

Such are the bare bones of his professional career.

But the man himself was much more than that. One recalls the slim, neat brown figure, slightly stooped, and the large enquiring brown eyes. It is a grief to realise that we shall never see him again. Shy and retiring in manner, his shyness concealed a first-class brain and a fixity of purpose that never wavered once he had determined that his chosen course of action was the correct one. His reading of medical literature was wide and continuous: he had a prodigious memory for the printed word, although he wrote but little himself, considering that far too much was written about medicine in general. Nor was he a frequent speaker at the Academy, but when he did join in our discussions at the Section of Obstetrics his contributions were phrased with a clarity and an economy of words which compelled our attention and our admiration. So, too, with his lectures: a good teacher, he attracted large numbers of students to the Coombe. As an operator he was conservative: he had undergone too many operations himself to inflict one on a patient unless its performance was clearly indicated. Like everything else about him, his technique was impeccable: neat, tidy, thorough, bearing the impress of his early training in Vienna.

Outside the claims of his family and his work, "Tim's" abiding passion was golf. In his youth he had been a scratch player, or better, and had represented his country as an International. As an older man he continued to play until the handicap of ill-health prevented; he took especial delight in introducing his son, "young Tim," to the subtler points of the game. His life was, in fact, one long struggle against ill-health, so cheerfully borne, without allowing it to interfere more than was absolutely necessary with his work or his game. Indeed, he often pursued both in a condition which would have driven most of us, his professional brothers, to retire to our beds.

In spite of his pain, he retained his sense of humour, and never became irritable. In his troubles he knew the innermost joys of an ideal home life: a devoted husband and father, his wife and children worshipped him, and he them. They have our heartfelt sympathy in their loss.

His lasting monument will be the high standard of moral conduct which he set us all. It is no exaggeration to say that for many of us, his associates, the test by which we judged our own course of action was: "Would Tim approve of this?" The writer has been closely associated with him for thirty years; no man has ever had a better, kinder or more reliable friend.

May the Lord have mercy on his soul.

R. M. CORBET.