

## MELANIE KLEIN

Dr. DUGMORE HUNTER writes: I should like to add a postscript to Dr. Winnicott's warm appreciation of Melanie Klein (October 1, p. 1026), and to mention in particular her work during the past decade. In these last years Melanie Klein gave much thought to problems of character formation and to the role of envy in human affairs—its destructiveness and the defences set up against it, especially the splitting mechanisms underlying schizoid thinking and behaviour, and the inhibition of creative activity induced by these defences. Her book *Envy and Gratitude* was published in 1957. She was also able to complete the long task of editing her *Narrative of a Child Analysis*, an extremely detailed account of four months' analytic work with a 10-year-old boy, but she did not live to see it emerge from the press. One of her last great pleasures was to accept an invitation from the Institute of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, to spend a week in residence there, giving seminars, "to further the understanding of psychotherapy with psychotic patients." This last engagement could not be fulfilled.

## J. M. MUNRO KERR, M.D., F.R.F.P.S., F.R.C.O.G.

The obituary of Professor J. M. Munro Kerr was published in the *Journal* of October 15 (p. 1166).

Professor G. I. STRACHAN writes: The passing of Professor Munro Kerr at the advanced age of 91 seems almost like the end of an obstetrical era. In long retirement, far from his native Glasgow, he was only a name to the more junior of our colleagues, but in his heyday he was a power in the land and a man of international reputation. Although his chief monument is his classic *Operative Midwifery*, later *Operative Obstetrics*, he wrote extensively on practically every aspect of obstetrics and he adorned every subject that he discussed.

He kept himself well abreast of modern developments in obstetrics such as soft-tissue placentography, x-ray pelvimetry, and the investigation of pregnancy toxæmia, but he was essentially a clinician, and those of us who were privileged to work with him in his earlier days were continually impressed by his remarkable clinical judgment and skill. He was one of a generation of pioneers which included Blair Bell, Berkeley, Bonney, Fothergill, and Donald, and it is hardly to be expected that we shall see their like again. Now that his tall, slim, immaculate personality has faded into the shadows, his memory will remain dear to those of us who knew him, and especially to those who worked with him.

J. C. M. writes from Georgetown, British Guiana: It is with great sorrow that I learn of the death of Munro Kerr. To those of us who were privileged to know him and to collaborate with him his loss is much more than the breaking of a link with the past, for he was a wise and kindly counsellor, and a friend who radiated good humour and inspired confidence for the future. To a younger generation of obstetricians it may come as a surprise to learn that this almost legendary figure was, till so recently, still with us. His influence on obstetrics extended over the greater part of a century. It was in the industrial Glasgow of the late eighteen-hundreds—a city where malnutrition and rachitic deformities were rife—that he had his training in the rough and tumble of obstetrics. Then, too, he witnessed some of the desperate caesarean operations that were beginning to be performed. This experience caused him to devote himself to means of perfecting the operation; and his introduction of the "lower-segment" technique was in large measure responsible for the present-day safety of the operation. In this and in many other matters he was an innovator and—perhaps even more important—an untiring evangelist.

Munro Kerr was one of the most widely read medical men of his time. English, French, and German publications were all taken in his stride, and, almost to a fault, he

followed, especially as he grew older, the work of his younger colleagues, never hesitating to divest himself of old ideas if these should be proved untenable or based on doubtful evidence.

Though a good bedside teacher, he was not a fluent speaker. His great strength lay in the charm of his writing—and this was apparent whether in a personal letter or an erudite textbook. In each there was the same simple but arresting phraseology, the shrewdness of argument, and the occasional upsurge of pawky Scots humour which endeared him to the reader. But with all this appearance of spontaneity, there was hard work too. "Writing is fun," I have heard him exclaim, "there is great satisfaction in pondering for a whole day and then selecting the right word for the difficult phrase."

When infirmity made it more and more difficult for him to leave Canterbury—his chosen home of retirement—and visits to the London libraries were no longer possible, he turned to the writing of historical sketches. He was particularly gratified when, in his 87th year, he was asked to give an address to his old university. This he did, choosing very appropriately for the Glasgow school the life and work of John Hunter.

And still the urge to write continued. In a letter I received only a few months ago he announced that he was engaged on something new, *The Reminiscences of a Victorian Gentleman*. The Victorian Gentleman is now, alas, departed, but the influence of the Grand Old Man of Obstetrics will long remain.

Dr. W. G. MACKAY writes: I was blessed with the great good fortune to be Professor Munro Kerr's Hall Fellow during the period he occupied the Regius Chair of Midwifery at Glasgow University. In these times Glasgow was the hub of the obstetrical universe and J. M. M. K. the undisputed world authority in his specialty. Every relevant article which was published quoted his writings, and from all quarters of the globe came obstetricians both great and unknown to pay respects and homage to the acknowledged master and see him at work. His was a name to conjure with, especially where the candidature of professorial chairs or other sought-after posts was at stake. These were halcyon days for the Glasgow school of obstetrics.

But to myself, and I think to all who knew him, the glamour of Munro Kerr was not a reflection of his fame and achievements, gigantic as these were—it radiated from a beautiful personality. No man was more lovable or more loving. He possessed by nature and by grace all the attributes of a perfect gentleman. Tall, dark, and slender, very good-looking, patrician and thoroughbred, always immaculately dressed and groomed, with impeccable manners and courtesy, he stood out as distinguished and imposing at any gathering at home or abroad, and was usually placed in, and always adorned, the seat of honour. He clung to one or two of the marks of an Edwardian dandy—the monocle, for instance. In conversation his wise face lighted up and became transparent with understanding and recognition to an extraordinary degree, and in addressing an audience it was not unusual for him to get carried away, his enthusiasm for his subject reaching a white heat. Pervading this imposing presence was an aura of merriment and festivity: his humour was never long in bubbling to the surface.

He treated his assistants as if they had been his own sons, and to them he was a second father, almost a second god. Once adopted they were not only "with" him they were "of" him, sharing everything and left out of nothing. They could depend upon him utterly and absolutely. Nonentities they might be, but he regarded them as equals: they became collaborators and co-authors in his multitudinous papers and books, they were introduced with parental pride to the great men of the profession, they lunched with the professor at his club. In the evenings they got a warm welcome to his sanctum at the back of his house, where, ensconced among books, he was

interminably writing. Not least in the estimation of a young man was the delight, at the tea interlude, of ascending to the drawing-room and finding if lucky one of his beautiful daughters at home in addition to his charming, gentle, and gracious wife. Failing this, the libations would be stronger, and Munro Kerr would recount all the wisdom of the universe until the small hours.

J. M. M. K. was modest about his achievements, but he told one story with pardonable pride. As a very young obstetrician he read his first paper at the Edinburgh Obstetrical Society in which he advocated the use of caesarean section in opposition to difficult forceps delivery in cases of contracted pelvis. In the subsequent discussion a very senior and eminent Edinburgh obstetrician got up and said he had never come across a case in which he could not pull the head through the pelvis with forceps. To this Munro Kerr replied that he was not quite so strong. Time vindicated this and most of the innovations which he sponsored, for he emblazoned the whole realm of obstetrics with the motto, "Non vi sed arte."

Munro Kerr shared with artists and poets the priceless faculty of seeing the world through rose-coloured spectacles, of seeing a pebble as a gem and a toad as a swan. The number of people he held in the highest esteem, if not actually setting them up on pedestals, was legion. Where other men might tend to belittle or depreciate he was more likely to canonize. He seemed to live in a scintillating and exhilarating world in which heroes and demi-gods were in a comfortable majority. A monster for work, he engaged in it with zest as if it were the most engrossing and fascinating hobby ever planned by the Almighty for the delectation of man. He would exhort his younger colleagues to "hold up the torch of high endeavour" and to do whatever they undertook with all their might and main, but his own example was the greatest inspiration.

In his old age, when he had laid down his tools, I said to him he must have a wonderful feeling of fulfilment. He replied that the tragedy of existence was that one could accomplish so little in the span of a lifetime. One is grateful that the world can produce such men, even if only at rare intervals.

#### G. H. THOMSON, M.B., Ch.B.

The obituary of Dr. G. H. Thomson was published in the *Journal* of October 15 (p. 1167).

N. C. F. M. writes: I wish to add a personal tribute to the late Dr. G. H. Thomson, who practised in Longtown, Cumberland, for the past 32 years: for 10 years of that period I was associated with him as his assistant. He was a man of high ideals, who always gave of his best. He shunned and positively abhorred cheap popularity. To him the truth was always more important than the opportunity to gain temporary favour. His standard of practice was of the highest, and his efficiency in running it filled me with great admiration and envy. His organizing ability in spheres outside the practice of medicine was amazing. Any job he took up had to be done well, and there were never any half measures. He did a great deal for Longtown outside his professional duties, and his striving to attain the peak of knowledge and efficiency in this work was first-class. He would read and study everything and anything about the subject to equip himself fully for the task.

It was natural that, as his assistant, I fell far short of his high standard. For this he always made most generous allowances; and if it proved necessary he would show the utmost loyalty and back me to the limit should I ever make a mistake. I learned a great deal from him and benefited enormously from his example and experience. He had little time or patience for those people who tried to be clever, and he got really annoyed with anyone who tried to cover up deficiencies, and especially lies, by trying to influence him with honeyed words. His personality was such that he could be most controversial. This kept you on your toes, but he invariably, if wrong, graciously conceded any

point in the most charming manner. He never wore his heart on his sleeve, and could be austere and impatient: this did not, however, blind him to the weaknesses in others, and he could approach them with understanding, kindness, and consideration.

His main fault lay in always being shy of his greatest attributes. He almost seemed to put up a barrier to conceal them, which was a great pity, for he had high ideals and an unequalled faculty for always striving to give of his best. He always seemed rather ashamed and even annoyed to be told of them, and he was certainly the last man to admit that he had any at all. I will miss him a great deal, for my association with him reached, at times, very intimate levels, and from him I learnt the very best way to run a practice. Even our disagreements produced lessons of value, and it was most stimulating to work with and for so controversial a personality. We can indeed offer to his widow and three daughters our sincere expressions of deepest sympathy.

Sir JOHN GOODWIN, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O.  
Hon.D.Sc., F.R.C.S., Hon.F.R.C.S.Ed.

The obituary of Sir John Goodwin was published in the *Journal* of October 22 (p. 1242).

Sir HENRY BASHFORD writes: I only came to know John Goodwin, as a Wiltshire neighbour, during the last twelve years of his life, but nobody could have doubted, almost at first sight, the reason for his laurels, both as Director of Medical Services in the latter years of the 1914-18 war and afterwards as a Governor in Australia. During most of his last years, the upkeep of a country house having become too burdensome, he lived in a hotel in Marlborough, where he had a small private sitting-room. But even in his late seventies and early eighties he was still a tall and upright figure and an ardent shot and fisherman, who loved to help an occasional boy from the College to beguile a trout from the Kennet or give a tip or two on the ways of a hare to the young followers of the newly formed College beagles.

Reminiscing, as old men will, he was always more ready to talk about sport than professional matters, but he did once tell me, with a twinkle in his eye, of his coaching at Buckingham Palace before taking up his governorship. "You mustn't forget," King George V said, "that you will be my personal representative out there, and if any of my sons visit you, as they may well do, mind you see that they treat you with proper respect." The King then asked him what his own politics were. Goodwin, however, in spite of his natural simplicity and forthrightness, was not to be drawn, even by his Sovereign, for whom he had the deepest admiration. "But I can promise you this, Sir," he said, "that nobody in Australia will know either."

Although towards the end he became very deaf and nearly blind, his sense of fun never forsook him, and one of his favourite stories was about an old lady, a fellow occupant of the hotel, who once invaded his sanctum. On the wall above the fireplace was a row of four mounted fox masks. Each of them was the emblem of a never-to-be-forgotten day, and one of these had left him, in a winter dusk, more than eighteen miles from home, most of which he had had to (or did) walk in order to spare a tired horse. "And do you mean to tell me, Sir John," the old lady inquired, "that you actually shot all those?"

Mrs. Eleanor Elizabeth Lloyd died on October 20 at Hartley Wintney, Hampshire, on the eve of her 106th birthday. A grand-niece of Sir Charles Hastings, she was the last surviving link with the founder of the British Medical Association. Though it is 94 years since Sir Charles Hastings died, Mrs. Lloyd remembered him well, for as a girl she used to pay him a regular visit at Worcester on New Year's Day.