Obituary.

ALEXANDER PATTERSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.,
LATE SURGEON TO THE WESTERN INFIRMARY, GLASGOW.

Dr. ALEXANDER PATTERSON, for some thirty years a leading consulting surgeon and teacher of clinical surgery in Glasgow, died recently at Draperstown, co. Derry, a property which had been in his family for many years, and to which he retired about four years ago.

Alexander Patterson was educated at the University of Glasgow, and graduated M.D. in 1854; he became F.R.C.S.Edin. in 1860, and F.F.P.S.Glasg. in 1869. In 1868 he was appointed Dispensary Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary and Surgeon to the Glasgow Lying-in Hospital. In 1872, having removed to the western part of the city, he became Surgeon to the Lock Hospital, and shortly afterwards to the Western Infirmary, then recently opened. While attached to the Royal Infirmary, he had the great advantage of witnessing the steps by which Lord Lister developed the antisepsic system. Patterson early grasped its significance, and, in addressing the Glasgow Medico-Chirurgical Society in 1873, he spoke of it as ranking only second in importance in practical surgery to the introduction of chloroform. As an operator he was both skilful and successful, remarkable for his neatness and rapidity, due, probably, in part, to the fact that he was ambidextrous. His surgical dexterity, combined with his adoption of the antisepsic system, account for the long series of ovariotomies he performed without a death, at a period when such a record was the exception rather than, as at the present day, the rule.

knowledge concerning these valuable remedies, it must not be forgotten that radiography is recognized as a special branch of our profession, and there exists a number of medical men whose living depends upon it. I trust that the committee of the Radium Institute will keep this fact in mind when drawing up rules for their future guidance.

—I am, etc.,
Birmingham, Feb. 8th.

JOHN HALL-EDWARDS.

BOYS' RACES.

Sir,—Pray extend the hospitality of your columns to the opinion of our highest medical authorities, and so save many a boy from physical wreckage in his youth or later years.—I am, etc.,

J. HERBERT FARMER,
Old Harrovians and Middlesex County Footba.
Captain, 1855-61.

19, Portland Place, W.,
January 26th, 1909.

Dear Mr. Farmer,

In reply to your inquiry, we have no hesitation in saying that we consider that school and cross-country races exceeding one mile in distance are wholly unsuitable for boys under the age of 12, as the continued strain involved is apt to cause permanent injury to the heart and other organs.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) L. LAUDER BRUNTON.
THOMAS B. BARLOW.
JAMES P. GOODHART.
W. H. HALE WHITE.
ALFRED FRIPP.

He was a pioneer in renal surgery, and published in 1880 what is believed to be the first case of nephrotomy deliberately undertaken for the removal of a stone from the kidney. He wrote on the treatment of aneurysm by digital compression, and on strangulated hernia, his interest in the latter subject leading him to devise a herniotome, which was a great improvement on that invented by Sir Astley Cooper. He also appreciated the importance of fresh air at a time when the belief that warmth was necessary for surgical patients sometimes led to hospital wards being very ill-ventilated. He insisted on all the windows in his wards being kept wide open at the top day and night, and often asserted, not only that the nurses in his wards were the healthiest in the infirmary, but also that surgical patients admitted with bronchitic coughs rapidly got rid of them.

He was a man of some what austere exterior, but possessed a most genial and lovable nature, and was always delighted to help a younger man to acquire the surgical art. As a clinical teacher he had a high reputation, and his old students will agree that what they learnt from him has always remained with them. As an operating surgeon Dr. Patterson was for some thirty years one of the best known men in the West of Scotland, whose opinion was valued as highly as his operative skill was admired.

In his early days he was an enthusiastic volunteer, and always recalled with pleasure that he was one of the guard of honour formed to receive Queen Victoria at the opening of the Loch Katrine Waterworks in 1859. He had a fine collection of coins, tokens, and medals, and was well known as a collector of the works of Robert Burns.