

## KARL SCHROEDER.

(With Portrait.)

DR. KARL SCHROEDER, professor of gynecology and obstetrics at the University of Berlin, died after a short illness on February 7th last.

Prof. Schroeder was born on the 11th day of September, 1838, at New Strelitz, grandduchy of Mecklenburg. He attended the lower schools of his native town, and there also passed his final examination in classics before entering the University. He began to study medicine in Würzburg during the winter term 1858-59. After spending two years as a student at Würzburg, where he is said to have been an active member of one of the *Corps*, he went to Rostock and prepared for his first examination in anatomy, physiology, and the natural sciences. Having passed the same, he returned to Würzburg in the summer of 1861 to take up the study of clinical medicine, and then again to Rostock in the fall of 1862; there during the following year passing the state-examination, and also taking the degree of M.D. He immediately became assistant to the professor of clinical medicine at Rostock, but held this position only for a short time, preferring to accompany Veit to Bonn, whither the latter had been called, and devoting himself solely to the study of gynecology and obstetrics. He remained as assistant to the clinic at Bonn until 1868. In 1866, he had become lecturer (*Privatdozent*). At that time he was called to Erlangen to fill the chair of Obstetrics, just vacated, and received the title of extraordinary professor; but scarcely a year elapsed before he was created an ordinary member of the medical faculty. He continued as director of the clinic at Erlangen for eight years, when he moved, for a last time, to Berlin, as successor to Martin, first to the Charité Hospital, and finally, five years ago, to the newly erected Universitäts-Frauenklinik, in the Artilleriestrasse, one of the finest and best endowed institutions for clinical instruction in the world.

It would prove a difficult task to do full justice to the literary work of one who, almost entirely engrossed by the duties incumbent on him as director of a clinic, both in hospital and private practice, nevertheless labored so assiduously for the advancement of the science which he had chosen as his life-work. We will attempt, however, to notice Prof. Schroeder's most important contributions. His first publications that attracted attention were his researches on retro-uterine hematocoele, "Kritische Untersuchungen über die Hematocele retrouterina," Bonn, 1866; "Einseitige Haematometra bei Verdoppelung des Genitalcanals," *Berl. Klin. Wochenschrift*, 1866, 38; and "Drei Fälle von Haematocoele retrouterina," *Berl. Klin. Wochenschrift*, 1868, 4 and 5. The pathology, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of the diseases are discussed, and illustrated by cases from the author's own practice, and attention called, for the first time, to the differential diagnosis of the two affections. In 1866 he further published, in the *Monatshefte für Gynaekologie*, "Temperaturbeobachtungen im Wochenbett," and in *Virchow's Archiv*, "Zur Lehre der pathologischen örtlichen und allgemeinen Wärmebildung," wherein elaborate tables of temperature-measurements in the axilla, anus, vagina, and uterus are recorded in non-pregnant and pregnant women, and during labor, and explanations offered for the difference in local warmth under the various conditions indicated. In 1867, there appeared from his pen a monograph, "Schwangerschaft, Geburt und Wochenbett," 248 pages, treating the physiology and pathology of pregnancy from the author's own point of view, and with little reference to literature already extant on the subject, a large number of his own cases being interspersed in the text. No doubt, this treatise was the precursor of his text-book on obstetrics, the first edition of which appeared in 1870, the subject-matter in both being similarly disposed of. In 1867, he also contributed a paper, "Ueber die verschiedenen Messungsmethoden der conjugata vera," in the *Monatshefte für Gynaekologie*, explaining the inaccuracies arising under certain conditions in the measurements of the conjugata externa and diagonalis. It will be noticed that up to this time Prof. Schroeder had been a frequent contributor to the current literature of gynecology and obstetrics, and if during later years his contributions were few, this was due to the publication of his two text-books on obstetrics and gynecology, respectively; the latter



of which appeared in 1874, and then, in 1868, he had, for the first time, assumed the directorship of a clinic, and with it responsibilities towards his pupils which, in a man of Prof. Schroeder's conscientiousness, must have been the equivalent of unrelenting scientific labor. His text-books, the vademecum of almost every German student of medicine, that have been translated into nearly all languages of civilized Europe, need only be mentioned. They were the means of his splendid academic career and remain the lasting memorials to his name. They have appeared in the seventh and ninth editions, respectively. In 1872, Prof. Schroeder wrote one of Volkmann's Vorträge, "Aetiologie und Intrauterine Behandlung der Deviationen des Uterus nach Vorn und Hinten," advocating the use of the intrauterine stem. In 1873, he again contributed to the subject of hematocele in the *Archiv für Gynaekologie*, "Ueber die Bildung der Hematocele retrouterina und anteuterina," describing the anatomical relations of these tumors to the surrounding viscera, the conditions under which they form, and the laws governing the action of free and encapsulated liquids in the peritoneal cavity. In 1874, he communicated a case of air-cysts in the vaginal mucous membrane in the *Deutsches Archiv für Klin. Medicin.* His following publications appeared almost exclusively in the *Zeitschrift für Geburtshülfe und Gynaekologie*, of which he was one of the editors, the greater part of them as reprints of papers read before the Gynecological Society of Berlin. They are: "Adenom des Uterus," 1877, distinguishing for the first time a diffuse adenomatous infiltration of the uterine mucosa and a polypous variety, a histological study. "Zur Operativen Gynaekologie," 1878, where, among other operative measures, Schroeder describes his method of total excision of the cervix, after incisions into the fornix vagina, in contradistinction to the funnel-shaped excision, and his method of excision of the mucous membrane of the cervix by transfixing, after lateral incision of the cervix. "Ueber die operative Behandlung der extraperitoneal inserirten Ovarialkystome," 1878, advocating partial excision of these ovarian tumors in difficult cases, and stitching of the remaining portion to the abdominal walls. "Die Laparotomie in der Schwangerschaft," 1880, containing valuable suggestions with reference to the diagnosis of pregnancy, complicated by ovarian tumor or myoma. The treatment is considered in connection with twelve of the author's



cases. "Ueber die theilweise und vollständige Ausschneidung der carcinomatösen Gebärmutter," 1881. The various methods of partial and total extirpation, and the indications for each form the subject of this communication. We notice that, under the head of total extirpation by the vagina, Schroeder recommends the tilting out of the uterus through the opened cul-de-sac of Douglas, ligaturing the broad ligaments from above, whereas of late he operated with the uterus in situ, ligaturing as he separated the attachments of the broad ligaments to the uterus. "Ueber Myomotomie," 1882. The intra- and extra-peritoneal methods of supra-vaginal amputation are compared with each other, and preference is given to the former. The suturing of the stump in tiers (layers) is recommended, also limited excision, if practicable, with the formation of a new uterus. "Ueber die Enucleation interstitieller Myome," 1884, an exposition of the various methods of myomotomy, according to the location of the tumor, as they are now practised in the clinic at Berlin. "Die Excision von Ovarientumoren mit Erhaltung des Ovarium," 1885, advocating, in double ovariectomy, the wedge-shaped excision on one side, if possible, with consecutive suturing of the remainder of the ovary in young women, with a view to the possibility of later conception. "Ueber fortlaufende Catgutnaht," 1886. The continuous catgut suture is introduced in plastic operations on the vagina and perineum, and recommended for suturing of the stump of the uterus after supra-vaginal amputation. "Ueber die Castration bei Neurosen," 1886, in which he reports ten oöphorectomies for neuroses, in only two of which no improvement resulted. Conditionally, he approves of the indication for operation.

Communications from his pen have also from time to time appeared in the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF OBSTETRICS*, of which he was a collaborator, and in the *British Medical Journal*. In conclusion, it is but just to say that what has appeared under Prof. Schroeder's own name forms but a part of his literary work, nor is it derogatory to the merits of his assistants and pupils to regard him as the intellectual author of much that has been published under their names.

To say that Prof. Schroeder was a brilliant clinical teacher would be untrue to the memory of the deceased. His style was not elegant, but always fluent, and his words were well chosen. His delivery was characterized by earnestness and self-



conviction, and these qualities won for him the admiration of zealous students. Never did he seek to reveal the lack of knowledge by flowery rhetoric; nor was there ever, perhaps, an occasion for this, and those who were fortunate enough to listen to any of Prof. Schroeder's clinical demonstrations must certainly have come away with the conviction that absolute confidence could be placed in what had there been uttered. He seemed to regard it as his greatest responsibility to impart to others as definite acquisitions of his science only that which he, in his large experience, had thoroughly tested, and frequently newly formulated, and at those moments his desire to convince also his hearers of what with him had become an established fact became apparent in his earnest manner of expression.

He certainly possessed all the qualities essential to a good surgeon; above all, calmness and simplicity of procedure. At his laparotomies he was assisted by only one of his large staff, and the few instruments he used were placed next to him on a small elevated table, where he seized them himself. Prof. Schroeder operated very quickly, and it was sometimes remarkable with what accuracy and rapidity he performed plastic operations upon the perineum and vagina, when his shortsightedness, which he never corrected with glasses, is taken into consideration. He was a courageous, but not a reckless surgeon, and when he had, after due consideration, made up his mind to attempt operative interference, the magnitude of the act never caused him to shrink from the responsibility of undertaking it. In critical moments he inspired confidence by his composure, and prevented unnecessary action on the part of those assisting him. His operations were always attended by a large number of German and foreign physicians, and the eagerness with which invitations to them were sought for is sufficient proof that they were seen with satisfaction and profit.

One quality which tended to a great extent to facilitate the large amount of work at the Universitäts-Frauenklinik was Prof. Schroeder's punctuality. It was his custom to perform abdominal sections at an early hour in the morning, and at the time set down he would enter the operating theatre to find the patient already under chloroform, and to begin work immediately. The same accuracy prevailed in all his professional work with his assistants. His relations with them were most pleasant, though never cordial or intimate. He very seldom,

in leisure moments, gave them an opportunity of enjoying him socially, as is generally the agreeable and beneficial privilege of assistants at German clinics. It is, therefore, certainly the highest compliment to his memory to say that, despite this, he was regarded with affection and veneration by all who were fortunate enough to work with him, under his supervision. In his assistants he placed a large amount of confidence, and gave them ample occasion for personal work, and it certainly was one of his foremost merits to have been able to incite in his co-workers a longing for scientific research. Although, at his age, it cannot yet be said that he created a *school*, in the sense in which that term is used abroad, it must certainly be acknowledged that some of the best work in the allied sciences of gynecology and obstetrics has been accomplished by his pupils, and it is to be hoped that those who were, at the time of his death, enjoying the benefits of a more intimate scientific intercourse with him, will continue to labor in the field of science, and thus conduce to the perpetuation of his name.

His life at home is said to have been a most happy one. He leaves a widow and a large number of children to mourn his loss, and many friends and admirers to join them in their grief over one whose name will always stand forth pre-eminent in the annals of medical science.

FREDERICK KAMMERER.

NEW YORK, February, 1887.



In original *Handwritten* of *great* *practical*  
*W. L.*