

PEN. PHOTOGRAPHS.

BY DR. D. CLARK, PRINCETON, ONTARIO.

S Y M E .

At the little wicket-gate of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, stood a grey-haired sentinel, as I entered for the first time. On the black-board in the entry was written by this cerberus, "Sectio Cadaveris, Dr. Balfour" and "Mr. Syme," not Dr.—(in Britain the surgeon and the physician do not always merge their professions). Jolly, rollicking students are pouring in,—some to the *post mortem*—some to the wards—but the greatest number to the theatre where Syme was to operate. He for the first time in the history of the hospital, and the second in the annals of surgery, was to excise the tongue of a man for cancer. The theatre—small, dingy, badly lighted from the north, and with break-neck seats towering with alpine steepness above one another—was crowded to its utmost capacity by a tumultuous throng. Round the table were about a dozen surgeons chatting and discussing, but when the patient walked in and laid himself down upon the operating table, a thin, dark-featured, withered-up, and unostentatious man rose up and took his coat off. There was no fuss about him, but in all his movements there was an air of determination, or let me rather say of resolution. That man could not be indecisive if he tried, for the thin and compressed lips and the *positiveness* of manner, and firmness of speech as he explained the case declared that the mind was "made up," without fail, to accomplish a certain work, and it was done in all its terrible details, and although death was the result in this case, he succeeded afterwards. When Syme lectured he had poor utterance,—a nasal twang, and a faltering of voice,—not agreeable to listen to, until the ear became tutored to the discordant sounds. He was epigrammatic in his lectures and although he indulged in no useless verbiage, yet there was a completeness in every sentence which made his lectures a model for students to copy from, and made it important to catch every word which fell from his lips. He had not the elegance of diction of Simpson, or the flowery language of Bennett, or the smooth-flowing eloquence of a Henderson. His aim was to speak to the point with the fewest words possible to elucidate his subject. Hence his great popularity among those of his students who were of an analytical turn of mind, such always hate circumlocution, or even redundancy. Syme, like Simpson, was a son of the people. He came of an old and respectable family in Kinrosshire, and had an early training at the High School, Edinburgh. He was always reserved unless engaged in some of his favourite pursuits and then he was voluble in the extreme. One of his pastimes, when quite a lad, was experiments in chemistry, and to such an extent did his passion for it lead him, that he was forsaken by his classmates for fear of explosions from his odd mixtures. His pocket money went for chemicals