Adam, George Rothwell Wilson (1853-1924)

George Rothwell Wilson **Adam** (1853-1924), physician, was born on 22 January 1853 at Leeds, Yorkshire, England, son of George Wilson **Adam** (d.1901), Presbyterian minister, and his wife Elizabeth, née Rothwell. The family migrated to New South Wales when he was a child, and in 1861 moved to Victoria where his father served first at Brighton, then at country centres including Koroit, Horsham and finally Urana, New South Wales. In 1867 Rothwell **Adam**, as he was known in later professional life, entered Scotch College, Melbourne. He matriculated at the University of Melbourne in 1870 but tried farming before determining on a career in medicine. At paternal insistence he went to his father's university, Edinburgh (M.B., Ch.M., 1878). As resident physician in the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital, he was inspired by J. H. Croom (later professor of midwifery, University of Edinburgh); in a similar post at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary he again devoted most of his time to diseases of women.

Returning to Melbourne, Rothwell **Adam** was registered for practice in Victoria on 7 November 1879 and set up in East Melbourne. Appointed to the honorary staff of the Alfred Hospital in 1881, he resigned in 1888 because of failure to establish there a gynaecological unit. That year he was elected an honorary obstetrician to the (Royal) Women's Hospital, Melbourne, and from 1895 until his retirement in 1913 was gynaecologist there. In 1900 he succeeded W. Balls-Headley as lecturer in obstetrics and diseases of women at the University of Melbourne. Always interested in teaching, he was a fine lecturer and long endeavoured to improve both the students' and midwives' courses of training. His comprehensive lecture-notes showed careful preparation and logical presentation. In 1884 he received the M.B., Melbourne (*ad eund*.) and in 1902 was awarded the M.D.

In 1900 a clinical school was established at the Women's Hospital. In the difficult years that followed, the survival of the school and of much else at the hospital depended many times on Rothwell **Adam**'s ethical behaviour, his courtesy, fairness, patience and understanding, and on the great respect he commanded. On his resignation as lecturer in 1913, a warm tribute was paid to his 'personal work and initiative' in building up the system of clinical teaching at the hospital.

His personal and professional distinction is well revealed in three of his papers: the annual lecture arranged by the Melbourne Medical Students' Society (1900), 'Ideals in the pursuit of medicine'; his presidential address to the gynaecology and obstetrics section at the Australasian Medical Congress (1911); and his Listerian Oration presented to the South Australian branch of the British Medical Association (1922). The last, an account of his part in introducing antisepsis and asepsis into obstetrics in Australia, was a masterly contribution on obstetric teaching. Rothwell **Adam** was also president of the Medical Society of Victoria and first president of the Melbourne Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society. In non-professional life he was a keen golfer and motorist (he had a 1913 Cadillac), took an interest in old Scotch collegian affairs and was a member of the Melbourne Club.

Rothwell **Adam** died on 26 December 1924 at East Melbourne from rupture of an aneurysm of the abdominal aorta and was buried in Boroondara cemetery. He was survived by his wife Eveline Grace, née Jones (d.1939), whom he had married on 27 November 1883 at Trinity Church, Melbourne, and by a son and one of their two daughters. He left an estate valued for probate at £21,420.