

OBITUARY.

WILLIAM HENRY RANSOM, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S.,
SENIOR CONSULTING PHYSICIAN TO THE GENERAL HOSPITAL,
NOTTINGHAM.

WE regret to have to record the death of William Henry Ransom, at the age of 83, which took place on the afternoon of April 16th at his residence, Park Valley, Nottingham. Though his health had been failing for several years, the end came somewhat suddenly from heart failure. By his death medicine and science lose one of their most distinguished exponents, and Nottingham one of its greatest citizens. A familiar and venerable figure, up to a very few years ago he moved about with a vigour and alertness which men twenty years his junior might envy. For the last three years he was confined entirely to the house in consequence of heart weakness following influenza, and suffered from several attacks of bronchitis and pneumonia. Nevertheless, his mental energy was little affected, and he was accustomed to spend several hours of every day in literary work which was an unending pleasure and helped him to retain to the end his natural cheerfulness.

Born at Cromer in 1823, and educated at a private school at Norwich, Dr. Ransom was, at the age of 16, apprenticed in the old-fashioned way for four years to a doctor at King's Lynn. He came of an old seafaring family, his father being the captain of a ship of which he was also the owner; his mother was the daughter of a clergyman. In 1843 he became a student at University College, London, and during his stay there gained several gold medals both at the College and at the University, where he graduated in 1848, taking the degree of M.D. in 1850. At University College Dr. Ransom had Huxley as a fellow student, and it is interesting to note that he was the indirect means of influencing Huxley's career. In a letter to Herbert Spencer, who was also a friend of Dr. Ransom, Huxley on June 1st, 1886, wrote:

You will be quite taken aback at getting a proof from me with so few criticisms, but even I am not so perverse as to think that I can improve your own story of your own life. I notice a curious thing. If Ransom had not overworked himself I should probably not be writing this letter, for if he had worked less hard I might have been first and he second at the examination at the University of London in 1845, in which case I should have obtained the exhibition, should not have gone into the navy, and should have forsaken science for practice.

During 1848 and 1849 Dr. Ransom pursued his studies on the Continent, first in Germany and then in France, obtaining a competent knowledge of the language of each country which enabled him to follow the medical and scientific literature of the Continent. Whilst living abroad, too, he made the acquaintance of many leading figures in the political and medical world. In 1869 Dr. Ransom was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and subsequently became a Fellow of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, and of University College.

Dr. Ransom settled in Nottingham in 1850, and took the house in Low Pavement now occupied by his son, Dr. W. B. Ransom. During the period of waiting for patients he did a good deal of laboratory work and had a couple of rooms fitted up for chemical and physiological study. Amongst the subjects he took up was the early development of the ova of fish, the result of his investigations being published in the Royal Society's *Proceedings* of 1854. Other researches of his were published in the *Transactions* of 1867, and in 1870 he was elected a Fellow of the Society. Dr. Ransom took a prominent part in the first meeting of the British Association in Nottingham in 1866.

In the year 1892, when the British Medical Association held its annual meeting in Nottingham, Dr. Ransom was President of the Section of Medicine, and in his address alluded to the subject of vegetable morbid growths and their relation to human pathology—a subject he developed much more widely during the last few years of his life. In the course of a strenuous life Dr. Ransom found time to devote to geology, and helped to explore the caves of Notts and Derbyshire. In the course of his investigations he discovered the jawbone of the lynx, believed to be the only one found in England, and this probably unique specimen is now in the Nottingham Natural History Museum.

The year 1854 saw his election as physician to the General Hospital, in succession to Dr. Gill, a position which he retained up to 1890, when he retired, and was appointed an honorary consulting physician, being succeeded by his son, Dr. W. B. Ransom.

It is, after all, as a sound and successful consulting physician for upwards of forty years that Dr. Ransom will be best remembered both by his patients and by the numerous members of the medical profession who sought his advice in Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, and the neighbouring counties. Pre-eminent in diagnosis, his self-reliance and confidence begot confidence in his patients. Sometimes impatient and occasionally brusque, especially in his earlier years, he was one of the kindest and most genial of men. Always attracted by the scientific side of medicine, no trouble or pains were too great to enable him to arrive at a correct diagnosis, and full use was made of the aids to diagnosis afforded by the collateral sciences. Several generations of practitioners have testified to his thorough straightforwardness in his relations both with doctor and patient. Like most men of unbounded energy combined with unusual mental powers, he naturally took the lead in whatever position he was placed. The enlargement and remodelling of the General Hospital in the late Seventies was mainly directed by his wide knowledge and experience, and resulted in a building in which ornament was subordinated to the essential principles of hospital hygiene. It is no little credit to his foresight, and to his appreciation of the importance of keeping in the van of sanitary progress, that the wards then designed remain after thirty years well abreast of modern requirements. Indeed, in all matters connected with the interests of the General Hospital he remained the leading and moving spirit for many years.

In 1871, when encyclopaedias and systems of medicine were not so numerous as at the present day, Dr. Ransom wrote the article on Intestinal Worms for the third volume of Dr. Russell Reynolds's *System of Medicine*.

In his early professional days he became sceptical about the truth of the opinion, then so widely held both by the profession and the public, that cold was the general cause of many diseases; and in 1887 he published a paper on Cold as the Cause of Disease, in which he pointed out that such a doctrine was a gross exaggeration. In recent years the part played by bacteria in the causation of pneumonia and the success of the open-air treatment of consumption have done much to bring round the profession towards his point of view. In his own habits and in the treatment of his patients he illustrated the soundness of his views. He was seldom seen wearing an overcoat, and he had trained himself to be remarkably indifferent to the discomforts of even severe cold.

The death from scarlet fever of two of his children in 1870 was a severe blow, but was received in a characteristic spirit. It stimulated him to study the subject of infection, and led him to devise a hot-air disinfecting stove, heated by gas, which was widely used in this country for many years until superseded by steam.

Dr. Ransom was one of the first to join the Robin Hood Rifles in 1859, and he continued as a private in the regiment for fifteen years. Side by side with him at that first parade was the late Right Honourable A. J. Mundella. In the early Sixties Dr. Ransom became a keen politician, throwing his whole-hearted energies on the side of Liberalism. In the candidature of the late Samuel Morley, Lord Amberley and the Honourable Auberon Herbert Dr. Ransom took a prominent part. He appeared on the hustings in the market-place to nominate Viscount Amberley, and made a strong speech in support of reform. Elections in those days were riotous affairs, and an echo of what happened is contained in his concluding sentence of regret at not being able to make himself better heard. Twenty years later, at the time of the Home Rule split, Dr. Ransom became a Unionist, although he took no prominent part in political warfare.

Dr. Ransom was much interested in education, and had some share in the foundation of the Nottingham Literary and Philosophic Society, now defunct. He also took an active part in the founding and early management of the Nottingham University College, and was long on the governing body of that institution, and of the High School.

About Christmas last Dr. Ransom started a new book,

which was to be a small and more popular treatise on the natural history of galls, a subject which had interested him for a great many years, and the pursuit of which had enlivened many a week-end and summer holiday spent among the beautiful woodlands near Belvoir or Edensor.

No account of the late Dr. Ransom would be complete which failed to record the remarkable happiness of his disposition—he was always bright, cheerful, and contented. In 1860 Dr. Ransom married Miss Elizabeth Bramwell, sister of an old college friend, Dr. Charles Bramwell of Nottingham, a member of a well-known Northumberland family, from whom Dr. Byrom Bramwell of Edinburgh is also descended. Mrs. Ransom died about eighteen years ago, but three sons survive—namely, Dr. W. B. Ransom, Senior Physician to the General Hospital; Mr. D'Oyley Ransom, solicitor, of Nottingham; and Mr. Herbert Ransom, who is an engineer in London.

JOHN COMYNS LEACH, M.R.C.S., M.D.DURH., J.P.,
STURMINSTER, DORSET.

It is with sincere regret that we record the death of John Comyns Leach of Sturminster Newton, Dorset, which occurred on board the ss. *Argonaut* between Malta and Port Said. It is not too much to say that the sad intelligence cast quite a gloom over the town of Sturminster Newton, where he had practised for over forty years, and was beloved by all classes. He became M.R.C.S.Eng. in 1864, L.S.A. in 1865, and M.D.Durh. in 1881. He received the Diploma of Public Health at Cambridge in 1876, and that of the Conjoint Board of England in the early Nineties. He was also a Fellow of the Institute of Chemistry. He acquired his medical education at University College, London, gaining a gold medal in comparative anatomy and becoming B.Sc. of London University in 1861. At the time of his death Dr. Leach held the appointment of County Coroner, County Analyst, and Medical Officer of Health for the Sturminster District. He was a member of the Lodge of Oddfellows at Sturminster, and was for some years its Medical Officer. Some time ago he retired from practice, but had lost none of his love for or interest in the profession, and remained an ardent and devoted member of the British Medical Association. Dr. Leach was a former President of the Dorset and West Hants Branch, and had for several years been Honorary Secretary to the West Dorset Division. He was a man of many parts, and his genial and sympathetic disposition had won the esteem and regard of all. He was greatly interested in all matters affecting the welfare of the people, and his position as chairman of the parish council and a Justice of Peace for the county may be taken as proofs of the high place he occupied in the estimation of those who had known him throughout a long, active, and honoured career. By his death the profession suffers a severe loss, and the blank in our ranks is a wide one. To those who knew him best his sterling qualities and steadfast friendship will ever remain as cherished memories. A man of literary bent, he was the author of *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man*, *Lectures on Cremation*, and many contributions to the medical journals. He leaves a widow and three daughters to mourn his loss.

DR. THOMAS HOLMES RAVENHILL.—Many of his old fellow-students will be grieved to hear of the death of Thomas Holmes Ravenhill, of Bordesley, Birmingham. In the early Sixties he came to Birmingham from Arlingham, Gloucestershire, where his father was vicar, and entered as a student at Queen's College. His quiet, unassuming manner, quaint humour, and straightforward character very soon made him beloved by his fellow-students, and the same qualities in after-life endeared him to a large circle of patients. After a successful student career, during which he took nearly all the medals at Queen's College, he held the resident posts at the Queen's Hospital, and was subsequently appointed Resident Surgeon to the Camp Hill Branch of the General Dispensary, where he remained for some years. He then went into partnership with the late Dr. Savage of Bordesley, and from that time his life had been that of a very busy general practitioner. The profession at large has reason to remember him with gratitude, for it was he who originated the idea of starting the Medical Sickness and Assurance Society, and the

meeting which inaugurated its existence was held in his dining-room. He was laid to rest on Friday, April 12th, at Yardley Wood Church, in the presence of a large assemblage, many patients coming a great distance to pay their last respects to his memory. He leaves a widow and six children, the elder of his two sons having adopted his father's career.

SURGEON-MAJOR WILLIAM EDWARD CAIRD, late of the Indian Medical Service, died at St. Leonards very suddenly, at the age of 74. He joined the Bengal Medical Department as an Assistant Surgeon, August 4th, 1857, and was promoted to be Surgeon-Major, August 4th, 1869.

DEATHS IN THE PROFESSION ABROAD.—Among the members of the medical profession in foreign countries who have recently died are Dr. August Grissing, physician-ordinary to the Duke of Parma, as the result of an accident on the railway, aged 54; Professor Gabritschewsky, a distinguished bacteriologist and founder of the Bacteriological Institute of Moscow; Dr. Ashbell P. Grinnell, for some years Dean of the Medical College of the University of Vermont; Dr. Hugo Magnus, professor of ophthalmology in the University of Breslau, well known by his contributions to the literature of his speciality, and by his writings on medical history; and Dr. William C. Glasgow of St. Louis, professor of laryngology in the Medical Department of Washington University, and one of the founders of the American Laryngological Association.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

APPOINTMENTS.

THE following appointments have been made:

- Dr. L. Cobbett, University Lecturer in Pathology.
Messrs. Cuthbert Wallace and Raymond Johnson, additional Examiners in Surgery in the 3rd M.B., Part II.
Dr. Barclay Smith, Examiner in Human Anatomy for the 2nd M.B., in place of Professor Macalister, who is unable to examine.
Dr. Harmer and Messrs. Bateson and Shipley to represent the University at the Seventh International Zoological Congress at Boston in August, 1907.

SANITARY SCIENCE EXAMINATION.

The following candidates have been approved in both parts of the examination:

- E. J. Brown, J. B. Cook, Catherine Fraser, F. H. G. Hutchinson, D. O. Kirkhope, C. H. Lindsay, D. McKail, P. MacKessack, J. S. New, W. G. Parker, J. C. Robertson, J. B. Smith, A. N. Stevens, F. E. Stokes, J. M. Strang.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

THE following candidates have been approved at the examinations indicated:

- FIRST M.B., CH.B.—C. Clyve, E. W. H. Cruikshank, A. Duguid, E. P. Duncan, *A. C. MacRae, E. L. Reid, J. Ross, C. K. Smith, W. M. Will, †J. Hunter, ‡E. H. Moore, †P. Reid.
SECOND M.B., CH.B.—W. Allan, †A. G. Anderson, W. Anderson, J. S. Annandale, D. M. Baillie, J. A. Beattie, J. C. Bell, W. J. Calder, A. J. D. Cameron, W. Chapman, R. G. Davidson, W. Y. Davidson, H. Duguid, W. Duguid, J. D. Fiddes, †W. J. Gerrard, A. Gray, J. Inkster, W. W. Jameson, H. G. R. Jamieson, J. Johnston, C. A. McDonald, Elizabeth McHardy, C. R. Macleod, G. McPherson, C. A. Masson, †G. S. Melvin, J. L. Menzies, H. S. Milne, J. Mitchell, D. C. Robertson, F. G. M. Ross, A. C. L. Smith, H. A. Smith, G. C. Soutter, D. M. Spring, W. L. Stephen, †A. G. Stewart, R. Tindall, C. C. Twort, A. J. Williamson, D. H. W. Williamson, A. Wilson.
THIRD M.B., CH.B.—C. D. S. Agassiz, J. Anderson, W. S. Angus, W. M. Badenoch, A. A. Bisset, †T. C. Boyd, J. Brown, D. Buchanan, J. G. Davson, G. Davidson, T. Davidson, R. E. Flowerdew, A. Gilchrist, S. Goodbrand, G. F. Hunter, P. S. Hunter, Elizabeth J. Innes, W. K. Irwin, E. Johnson, W. G. Macarthur, W. G. Macdonald, †J. D. Mackay, F. Macrae, R. McKae, B. W. Martin, A. Massey, A. J. Milne, N. B. Nicholls, J. Ogilvie, W. J. Pirie, J. Rennie, K. Ross, †R. J. Twort, W. G. Watt, M. J. Williamson, *C. C. Wood, †D. Wood, †J. H. Yorke, †J. G. Christie, †J. B. Cruikshank, †D. S. Garden, †J. B. Macallan, †A. MacRae, †A. J. W. Stephen, †J. Watt, †J. H. Will.

* With much distinction. † With distinction. ‡ Have still to be examined in certain subjects.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

KING'S COLLEGE.

A COURSE of nine lectures on visual and cutaneous sensations will be given in the Physiological Department by Dr. C. S. Myers, Professor of Psychology, during the summer session on Fridays, at 4.30 p.m., commencing on May 3rd. The lectures are free to students of King's College, students of other medical schools in London, internal students of the University of London, and medical practitioners on presentation of their cards.