

OBITUARY.

CHARLES WILLIAMS, F.R.C.S. EDIN., M.R.C.S. ENG.,
L.S.A.,

CONSULTING SURGEON, NORFOLK AND NORWICH HOSPITAL.

As briefly announced in the *BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL* of last week, the death of Mr. Charles Williams occurred at his home in Norwich on the afternoon of Sunday, August 11th.

About two months ago he contracted what was thought at first to be an attack of influenza, and although most of the other symptoms passed off, he was left with persistent hoarseness, and it was not until about a fortnight before his death that the cause of this was found to be a mediastinal tumour pressing upon the recurrent laryngeal nerve. Towards the end he suffered great distress from dyspnoea, and death came to him as a happy release.

Mr. Williams was born at Gloucester in the year 1829, and was the second son of Dr. Herbert Read Williams, who for many years practised in that city, and grandson of Mr. Edmund Williams, of Aberystwith. He was educated

at the Crypt Grammar School, Gloucester, and subsequently became a pupil of Mr. John William Wilton, the then Senior Surgeon at the Gloucester Infirmary. After three years at this hospital he was elected Assistant House-Surgeon at the Bradford Infirmary, where he remained for two years. He then entered at Charing Cross Hospital, where, as a student, he had a distinguished career, obtaining several medals. In 1857 he took the diploma of M.R.C.S. Eng., in the following year the L.S.A., and in 1869 the F.R.C.S. of Edinburgh. In 1858 he was House-Surgeon to the Royal Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital, and later in the same year was appointed House-Surgeon to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, which post he held for six years. At that time the House-Surgeon was the only resident medical officer in this hospital, and, in addition to his ordinary duties, he was made responsible for the general administrative work of the hospital. Mr. Williams entered upon his new duties with great zeal and energy, and was the means of effecting many much-needed reforms in the management of the hospital, in acknowledgement of which the Board of Management passed a special vote of thanks to him on his resignation of the post. He then started to make a practice for himself in Norwich, and in a short time met with considerable and deserved success. For many years he enjoyed a very extensive practice in Norwich and the district, and obtained a considerable reputation as an operator. In 1869 he was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. At that time the honorary staff was not elected by a representative Committee of the Governors as now, but every individual governor had a vote, which could be exercised by proxy, so that an election entailed not only an enormous amount of trouble to the candidates, but also involved them in considerable expense. In 1878 Mr. Williams was elected full Surgeon to the hospital, in succession to Mr. Firth, who died in that year. This position he held until last year, when he resigned, and was appointed Consulting Surgeon.

He was one of the original members of the Norwich Medico-Chirurgical Society, and held the offices of Honorary Secretary from 1876-9; Honorary Treasurer,

1885-8; and President, 1881-2. It was during the term of his presidency that he issued a valuable printed index to the manuscript catalogue of the Society's library. He was also a member of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society, and occasionally contributed to its *Transactions*.

Mr. Williams was a zealous, and indeed enthusiastic, collector of all possible information relating to Sir Thomas Browne, his works and his family, and was one of the greatest living authorities on these subjects. Amongst his publications may be mentioned *The Portraits of Sir Thomas Browne*, wherein is given a detailed account of the only three existing portraits—the Bodleian, the London, and the Norwich portraits. He wrote also *The Pedigree of Sir Thomas Browne*, and in connexion with this it was his intention, had he lived, to have gone to Scotland this autumn to gather any further possible information from the living descendants of Sir Thomas. He published *The Will of Sir Thomas Browne and of his Father* and *The Bibliography of the Religio Medici*, a second and revised edition of which appeared only a month before his death. On the occasion of the unveiling of Sir Thomas

Browne's statue in Norwich, on October 19th, 1905, Mr. Williams exhibited no less than eighty editions of the *Religio Medici* and other works by Sir Thomas Browne; and to further celebrate the occasion he presented to each guest present at the luncheon in the Blackfriars Hall a *Souvenir of Sir Thomas Browne*, containing twelve large fine illustrations with letterpress notes.

Mr. Williams was also a collector of portraits of past medical men of Norwich, and in the year 1871, the centenary of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, he conceived the idea that the "best method of commemorating the event would be by his collecting, as far as was possible, the likenesses of those who had been connected with the hospital in an honorary capacity." In this year he presented forty portraits to the hospital, and subsequently added some forty more, and in 1890 he published a short account of many of the medical men in this list.

Anything of an antiquarian nature, especially if bearing upon his own profession, had a great fascination for Mr.

Williams, and thus we are not surprised to find, among his other publications, papers on "The Barber-Surgeons of Norwich," "The Ordinances of the Guild of Barber-Surgeons of Norwich," and "The Treatment of the Sick in Norwich during the Seventeenth Century."

He married Miss Wellingham, of Thorne Hamlet, who survives him, and he leaves two sons and two daughters. He was buried at Eccles in Norfolk.

HARRY FREDERICK WHITCHURCH, V.O.,

MAJOR, I.M.S.

A TELEGRAM from India announces the death, on August 17th at Dharmala, of Major H. F. Whitchurch, who won the Victoria Cross at Chitral. He was born in September, 1866, received his medical education at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and entered the Indian Medical Service in March, 1888. He took part in the Lushai expedition in 1890, including the relief of Changail and Argal, for which he had the medal with clasp, and in the Chitral expedition in 1895, including the defence of the fort during its investment in March and April.



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