

OBITUARY.

HENRY W. RUMSEY, M.D., F.R.S.

DR. RUMSEY, whose death we last week recorded, will long be remembered in the profession, especially in the British Medical Association, as a man of peculiarly high intelligence, great power of generalisation, unrivalled knowledge of the principles of public medicine, and original genius in developing and applying them. He had neither the scientific insight into the particular facts of disease, nor the organising power and thoughtful eloquent diction of Simon; nor had he the patient love of figures and the masterly capacity—such as Farr has—for deducing from them conclusions which seize the imagination while they convince the reason. He was a philosopher who leaned to legislation; a *doctrinaire* who sought inspiration for his doctrines in a wide research, and a profound enthusiasm for humanitarian progress. To him State Medicine was not a word: it was the central idea of his life; preventive legislation was not a dream—as to many others it seemed, when in early years he first incessantly agitated the questions which lead up to it. It was the imperative necessity of the century, the ensign of our progress, the duty of our civilisation. His enthusiasm, his persistence, the largeness of his views, the sacrifices which he made of time and labour—such as others devote to personal advancement and professional success—did more than can now well be known to connect the dream of his earlier life with the commonplace dicta of the “sanitarians” of the Congress and the Parliament. Of the many who now devote themselves to the quasi-popular question of “public health”, few know how much they are indebted to him. His character was one of much refinement, gentleness, and culture; but he was gifted with persistence as well with earnestness. Those who worked with him soon learned from the volume of the correspondence with which he overwhelmed them, that he took his work with great seriousness; that he spared no pains to classify and to develop his ideas; and that he expected no small effort of attention from those who undertook to elaborate his schemes.

The memorandum in which his claims to a civil pension were set forth by the Joint Committee of the British Medical Association and Social Science Association, describes succinctly some of his chief public labours; although the catalogue is, of course, only one of results, and gives but little idea of the half century of patient, unwearying, ceaseless labour, by which he prepared his achievements, and at length commanded a measure of public success.

Dr. Henry Wyldbore Rumsey was born at Chesham, Bucks, on July 3rd, 1809. His grandfather, a younger son of an old family in South Wales, settled at Chesham about the middle of the last century to practise medicine, and was succeeded in his practice by his father, Mr. Henry Rumsey, who became a laborious and successful practitioner, almost the only surgeon within that distance from London who ventured to perform capital operations. He was an eminent botanist, and had prepared a work on botany for the press, when he found himself forestalled by another author, and therefore abandoned his purpose. Mr. Henry Rumsey's manuscripts of Hunter's Lectures were the best in existence, and were, consequently, used when those lectures were published. He married late in life Elizabeth Frances Catherine, second daughter of Sir Robert Murray, Bart., by whom he had four sons, and one daughter who died in infancy. Of this family, Henry Wyldbore Rumsey was the eldest. His education was somewhat desultory; among his tutors were the late Dr. Bosworth the Saxon scholar, and the Rev. Thomas Scott, of Gawcott, near Buckingham.

Under his father's auspices he was introduced to an elementary knowledge of medicine. When about sixteen years of age, H. W. Rumsey was sent to study at the Nottingham Hospital under Mr. Attenborough, a local celebrity; thence he passed to St. George's Hospital, and while there he was for a time a house-pupil of Mr. Cæsar Hawkins.

At the age of twenty-two, Dr. Rumsey was selected as resident physician to accompany the then Lord Dillon to his seat in Oxfordshire. After three months, however, his father, whose health was declining, was obliged to summon him home to take charge of the practice at Chesham, to which he was destined to succeed.

In 1835, Dr. Rumsey married Frances Sophia, eighth daughter of his father's friend, the late Rev. Stephen Langston, of Little Howard, in the county of Bucks, and practised upwards of three years in his native place. An opening at Gloucester, occasioned by the late Mr. Carden's leaving for Worcester, induced Dr. Rumsey to move thither in 1838, where he practised for twelve years.

In 1849, he was appointed cholera inspector at Gloucester, and the arduous labours which he then underwent entailed the loss of his own health, and compelled him to relinquish his practice in Gloucester at the close of 1851. He then moved to Cheltenham, and gradually gathered together a select practice, which placed him in the leading rank of the Cheltenham physicians, a position which illness compelled him to relinquish. His patients almost invariably looked to him as a personal friend, and adviser in difficulties unconnected with his profession. Their attachment to him has been shown by numerous acts of kindness, from the time of his first seizure until the hour of his release from his long and distressing illness. Dr. Rumsey's leading natural characteristics were delicate generosity and untiring industry. His suavity of manner and genuine kindness of heart endeared him to all with whom his private and professional career brought him into contact.

The name of Henry Wyldbore Rumsey was for forty years identified with the national sanitary movement, of which he was, from its commencement till he was disabled by illness, a recognised and influential leader.

In 1835, after having devoted much attention to the establishment of Provident Societies among the working-classes, he commenced his labours as Honorary Secretary of the Sick Poor Committee of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association—labours which were continued for ten years. He furnished materials for a series of Reports, on which was founded a Bill, introduced into the House of Commons in 1840, by Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, for the better regulation of Medical Relief under the Poor-Law. This led to his being examined, first in 1838, by the Poor-Law Committee of the House of Commons, and again, in 1844, by Lord Ashley's Select Committee on Medical Poor Relief, when he submitted a mass of evidence, collected with much labour, relating to the sickness prevalent among the poor in towns, and forcibly showing the need of preventive measures, under the superintendence and control of a General Department of Public Health. The results of these investigations, and of his previous inquiries into the working of the so-called Self-supporting Dispensaries, were embodied in two pamphlets published, the one in 1837, on the advantages to the poor of Mutual Assurance against Sickness, the other in 1846, in connection with Lord Lincoln's Public Health Bill, and Sir James Graham's Bill for the Regulation of the Medical Profession, on the “Health and Sickness of Town Populations”.

Since the publication in 1836 of his paper on the Statistics of Friendly Societies, with suggestions and forms for an improved Registration of Sickness in connection with them, Dr. Rumsey on many occasions, either singly in papers of remarkable ability, or in co-operation with others, pointed out with much clearness and force certain “fallacies of Vital and Sanitary Statistics”, and the difficulty of drawing correct conclusions regarding the Public Health from returns of Mortality, apart from Records of Sickness.

In 1848, in his “Remarks on the Constitution of the Authorities under the Public Health Bill”, then before Parliament, he anticipated, and indicated with great precision, the defects, many of which are still unremedied, of that important measure. The same high intelligence and remarkable mental activity and acuteness were conspicuously manifested by him in the prominent part he took in all the subsequent phases of sanitary legislation, and in the valuable evidence given by him before the Royal Sanitary Commission in 1869.

The fact of his having been consulted in 1849 by the Colonial authorities of St. Christopher's, with reference to a system of medical and sanitary management for the labouring classes in the island; and in 1850, by the Canterbury (New Zealand) Association, as to the sanitary arrangements for their infant colony, shows how high a reputation he had even then acquired as an authority in sanitary science. This reputation was established on a firm and lasting foundation by the publication in 1856 of his standard work, entitled *Essays on State Medicine*, which marked an epoch in the sanitary history of England, and was for many years the only systematic work on the subject in the English language. The very numerous and able papers presented by him since then to the British, the Social Science, and the British Medical Associations, and to the Manchester Statistical Society, or published either separately or in various reviews, form a record of unwearied literary and philanthropic activity such as not many public men can boast of. Among the most important of these, not already adverted to, are his Address on Sanitary Legislation and Administration, read at the first

meeting of the Social Science Association in 1857; Public Health, the right use of Records founded on Local Facts, in 1860; A Proposal for the Institution of Degrees or Certificates of Qualification in State Medicine, in 1865; Comments on the Sanitary Act, in 1866; an Address on State Medicine, delivered at the Dublin meeting of the British Medical Association in 1867, and followed by the formation of the Joint Committee of the British Medical and Social Science Associations, which applied for and obtained from Her Majesty's Government the appointment of the Royal Sanitary Commission in 1868; On Population Statistics, with reference to a County Organisation for Sanitary Administration, in 1870; and a paper on The State Medicine Qualification, which was read before the London meeting of the British Medical Association in 1873, and led to the appointment of a Committee for the promotion of legislation on that subject.

Dr. Rumsey's high personal merits and great public services were repeatedly and authoritatively recognised; viz., in 1863, by the Privy Council, by whose advice he was nominated by Her Majesty a Member of the General Medical Council; in 1867, when the degree of Doctor of Medicine, of Trinity College, Dublin, was conferred upon him, *honoris causa*; in 1868 and 1869, when he was nominated a member of the Royal Sanitary Commission; and in 1874, when he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Almost the last work upon which Dr. Rumsey was engaged, before the final break-down of his over-worked constitution, was the preparation for press of a series of *Essays and Papers on some Fallacies of Statistics, concerning Life and Death, Health and Disease* (Smith, Elder, and Co.) The title of this work always appeared to us as somewhat ill-judged, as those portions of Dr. Rumsey's brilliant essays on sanitary subjects, which deal with their statistical aspect, are by far the weakest; and in so far as they led Dr. Letheby and a number of less-widely known medical officers of health to attempt to discredit the national system of mortality statistics, they are to be regretted—regretted because, in attempting to point out statistical fallacies, he committed himself to fallacies which have misled many students of sanitary statistics. No one, however, who reads this volume of essays, can fail to admire the energy and earnestness which was brought to bear upon the discussion of the various branches of public health administration. These essays, which date between 1859 and 1871, discuss ably many of those questions which have yet to be answered. The registration of sickness, the scientific certification of all causes of death, the rectification of the gross anomalies in the boundaries of registration districts, which, during a long series of years, Dr. Rumsey laboured for so heartily and so disinterestedly, have still to be obtained; and it cannot but be useful to those who are striving for these necessities to successful sanitary administration, to read the convictions on these subjects of so earnest a sanitarian as Dr. Rumsey. The general appointment of medical officers of health throughout the country naturally affects some of Dr. Rumsey's suggestions, but cannot destroy their value for those still engaged in the struggle for improvement in our present chaotic system of sanitary organisation.

As a prominent member of the British Medical Association, the name of Henry Wyldbore Rumsey will always be held in honour. Mainly under his guidance, and largely at his instigation, it procured the appointment of the Royal Sanitary Commission, whence has sprung the improved sanitary legislation of our days; and he will be remembered among the band of workers—Farr, Simon, Stewart, Michael, Acland, Stokes, Clode, and Chadwick—who have placed the health of the people upon a new and surer footing during this half century, and have saved more lives than the Napoleons have sacrificed.

MEDICAL NEWS.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—The following gentlemen passed their primary examinations in anatomy and physiology at a meeting of the Court of Examiners on November 7th; and, when eligible, will be admitted to the pass-examination.

Messrs. George D. Dickinson, Alexander S. Greenway, Charles E. Walker, and William S. Palm, students of the Edinburgh School; S. T. D. Weston, John Whitehouse, and William H. Smith, of the Birmingham School; George D. M'Reddie and George P. Schakman, of the Calcutta School; Damodar P. Warlikar and Hormasji D. Masani, of the Bombay School; Herbert G. Cronk, B.A. Cantab., and T. W. H. Garstang, of St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Samuel H. Lyle and Arthur Jones, of the Liverpool School; Maurice Forde, of the Dublin School; Edward M. Knapp, of the Bristol School; and George S. Ward, of King's College.

The following gentlemen passed on November 8th.

Messrs. John G. Harwood, James Harrison, James W. Jeram, and John Buckle, of St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Alfred R. A. Ayres, Edward J. Havens, Charles E. Cocksedge, and Frederick W. D. M'Gachen, of the London Hospital; James W. Evans, John S. Buck, and Henry Ewbank, of University

College; Wm. T. Ward and Richard L. MacDonnell, of the Toronto School; George H. Garland and John J. Powell, of St. Thomas's Hospital; James Dobb, of the Manchester School; Richard Bowman, of St. Mary's Hospital; and Thomas A. Appleton, of St. George's Hospital.

Fourteen candidates out of the fifty examined, having failed to acquit themselves to the satisfaction of the Board of Examiners, were referred to their anatomical and physiological studies for three months.

APOTHECARIES' HALL.—The following gentlemen passed their examination in the science and practice of medicine, and received certificates to practise, on Thursday, November 2nd, 1876.

Congreve, George Thomas, Coombe Lodge, Peckham
Heelas, James, Fellows Road, South Hampstead
Ling, Charles Arthur Squire, Gorleston, Suffolk
Richardson, Thomas Arthur, Newport, Pembrokeshire

The following gentlemen also on the same day passed their primary professional examination.

Bellaby, Frederic, Middlesex Hospital
Hall, James Lees, St. Thomas's Hospital
Read, Edward Inskip, London Hospital
Stuart, Henry Ogilvy, Guy's Hospital

MEDICAL VACANCIES.

THE FOLLOWING vacancies are announced:—

ARDEE UNION—Medical Officer. Salary, £90 per annum. Applications on or before November 17th.
BANDON UNION—Medical Officer. Salary, £100 per annum. Applications on or before November 17th.
DERBYSHIRE GENERAL INFIRMARY—Assistant House-Surgeon. Applications on or before November 25th.
GLENORCHY and INISHAIL—Parochial Medical Officer. Salary, £60 per annum, with cottage. Applications on or before November 15th.
HACKNEY UNION—Medical Officer. Salary, £80 per annum. Applications on or before November 14th.
LEEDS FEVER HOSPITAL—Resident Medical Officer. Salary, £150 per annum, with board and lodging. Applications on or before November 29th.
LONGFORD UNION—Medical Officer. Salary, £120 per annum. Applications on or before December 5th.
NATIONAL DENTAL HOSPITAL—Assistant Dental Surgeon. Applications to the Treasurer, 149, Great Portland Street.
NEWHILL and DYCE—Medical Officer. Salary, £100 per annum. Applications on or before November 13th.
NORTH RIDING OF YORKSHIRE LUNATIC ASYLUM—Assistant Medical Officer. Salary, £120 per annum, with board, lodging, etc. Applications on or before November 18th.
ROYAL ALBERT EDWARD INFIRMARY, Wigan—Assistant House-Surgeon. Salary, £60 per annum and rations. Applications on or before November 27th.
TRINITY COLLEGE, Glenalmond—Resident Medical Officer. Applications on or before November 20th.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.

Names marked with an asterisk are those of Members of the Association.

BLUMER, Percy, L.R.C.S., appointed Junior House-Surgeon to the Sunderland Infirmary, *vice* Jas. Murphy, M.B., resigned.
BUCK, Henry J., L.R.C.P. Edin., elected one of the Surgeons of the Saffron Walden Hospital, *vice* Edward Harley, L.R.C.P., resigned.
*CLARKE, J. Lockhart, M.D., F.R.S., appointed Consulting Physician to the Chelsea Hospital for Women.
DENTON, A. H., M.R.C.S., appointed Assistant House-Surgeon to the Sheffield Public Hospital and Dispensary.
EVANS, T. M., M.R.C.S. Eng., appointed Assistant-Surgeon to the General Infirmary, Hull.
*GOWANS, William, L.R.C.P. Ed., elected Medical Officer to the *Wellesley* Training Ship.
LAMB, George, L.R.C.P., appointed Assistant-Surgeon to the General Infirmary, Hull.
*NICHOLSON, R. H. B., M.R.C.S. Eng., appointed Assistant-Surgeon to the General Infirmary, Hull.
SHERBURN, John, M.B., appointed House-Surgeon to the General Infirmary, Hull, *vice* Henry Thompson, L.R.C.P.
THOMPSON, Henry, L.R.C.P., appointed Assistant-Surgeon to the General Infirmary, Hull.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS.

The charge for inserting announcements of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, is 3s. 6d., which should be forwarded in stamps with the announcement.

BIRTH.

EATON.—At Trumpett House, Cleator, Cumberland, on October 29th, the wife of *John Eaton, M.D., of a daughter.

BOOKS, ETC., RECEIVED.

Operative Surgery and Surgical Anatomy. By Professor Claude Bernard and Ch. Huette (De Montargis). Translated from the French and edited by Arthur T. Norton, F.R.C.S. London: Ballière, Tindall, and Co. 1876.
On Alcoholism. By Dr. F. Magnan. Translated by W. S. Greenfield, M.D. London: H. K. Lewis. 1876.
Book of Medical Information and Advice. By J. Warburton Begbie, M.D., F.R.S.E. London: T. Nelson. 1876.
Epitome of Skin-Diseases. By Tilbury Fox, M.D., and T. C. Fox, B.A. Cantab., M.R.C.S. London: H. Renshaw.