

He was the first to call attention to the value of chloral in the treatment of epilepsy, and wrote an able paper on the subject in the *West Riding Asylum Reports*. He made a special study of the housing of the insane, and was anxious to see more thorough provision made for the early treatment of recent cases. He was the author of a valuable article on "The Treatment of Recent Cases of Insanity in Special Hospitals," contributed to this JOURNAL in 1894.

He was a man of broad sympathies and of benevolent disposition, generous, and kind-hearted almost to a fault, ever ready to encourage and assist those who needed sympathy or help. His old colleagues, and many others who knew him well, can recall many acts of practical sympathy and kindness towards those with whom he was brought into contact. As a superintendent he was eminently successful. His genuine kindness of heart and sympathetic manner endeared him to his patients, and his relations with those under his authority were always of the happiest kind. He took great interest in the welfare of attendants and nurses, many of whom have cause to remember him with gratitude. In private life he was a great favourite, being the life and soul of the circles in which he moved. Of late years, however, he went very little into society, leading, apart from his official duties, a somewhat retired life, and devoting himself to the supervision of his sons' education.

He married, in 1879, Louise, youngest daughter of the late T. W. Pearson, of Hull. His wife predeceased him about five years ago, but he leaves a family of four sons, to whom his comparatively early death will be an irreparable loss.

RINGROSE ATKINS.

By the demise, on the 4th of February, of Dr. Ringrose Atkins, Medical Superintendent of the Waterford District Asylum, at the early age of forty-seven, a striking personality has passed from amongst us. The call was startling in its suddenness, and many friends were hardly aware of his illness when the tidings of its fatal termination reached them. On Tuesday, the 1st, he began to feel the premonitory distress of the illness which was to carry him off so swiftly, notwithstanding which he went out in the afternoon to visit a lady. While in her house he was seized with more acute symptoms of the malady, and only reached home with difficulty. On Friday morning, after two days of intense suffering, he breathed his last, death being due to perforation from acute appendicitis, associated with the passage of a renal calculus.

A wave of genuine sorrow spread over all classes in the city of Waterford when the sad news became known. For Atkins was no ordinary man. His was a character rich, unique, and rare. In him intellectual talents of a high order were united to a sympathetic nature, generous feelings, and nobility of soul. And all were freely placed at the disposal of his fellow-men without distinction, high-born and humble, rich and poor. Wherever his help was needed that help was given; first of all to those who were his special charge, for towards the insane he always had a feeling of kindest interest, which even in maimed and shattered minds struck an answering chord, as was shown by the greeting of welcome he used to receive as he passed on his daily round through the wards. He never wearied in his efforts to cure or alleviate, and devoted a large portion of his time to entertaining his patients with his interesting lantern lectures, seaside excursions, and amusements of various kinds. And while, as he always did, making his patients the subjects of scientific observation, he never forgot that he was dealing with human souls. Outside his asylum work he was a leader in every good cause, and his labours in connection with the Young Men's Christian Association, of which he was President, and in furtherance of the cause of temperance, will not soon be forgotten.

Dr. Atkins sprang from a well-known Cork family, which contributed many members to the medical profession, including his paternal grandfather, his brother,

Dr. T. G. Atkins, a leading physician and surgeon in his native city, and other relatives. His father, William Atkins, was a leading architect in Cork, and also an artist, having studied in the various Continental schools. It was he who instructed young Atkins in early life, and from him, no doubt, he both inherited and acquired his artistic tastes, and his love for and knowledge of architecture. One of the earliest reminiscences of his childish talent was his painting a diorama of Switzerland, and lecturing on it, when he was only ten years old. His acquaintance with architecture he turned to good account in his asylum, as all structural operations he kept under his direct supervision, and was fond of saying he liked to know how every brick was laid. From his father also he probably inherited his love of travel, amounting in his case almost to a passion, which, happily, he was able to indulge to no ordinary degree. Of science he was not one whit less enamoured than of art; science and art, like twin sisters, seeming to have almost equal claims on his homage and affection. To these endowments he added a quite exceptional manual dexterity, coupled with mechanical skill, which found abundant room for exercise in the surgical part of his professional work, and in the operations connected with histology and photography, in both of which he was an adept. Inspiring all these natural gifts was a spirit of indomitable industry, which never flagged up to the closing hours of his busy life.

Educated in Queen's College, Cork, after a distinguished course he graduated in the Queen's University with honours, winning the gold medal for experimental physics at the early age of seventeen. He took the M.A. degree in 1871, and those of M.D. and M.Ch. in 1873. He obtained his first experience in lunacy practice as assistant medical officer in Cork Asylum, and in 1878 he was appointed Medical Superintendent of the Waterford District Asylum, which post he held till his death. During this prolonged period his relations with his patients, his Board of Governors, and the public were of the happiest kind. From an early stage in his career he was busy with pen and pencil, writing articles which he illustrated with his own drawings, which were of such exceptional merit as to draw from no less an authority than the illustrious Charcot words of generous commendation. Among his contributions to medical literature may be mentioned his Pathological Illustrations of Localisation of the Motor Functions of the Brain, and his papers on Arterio-capillary Fibrosis, On Morbid Changes in the Blood Vessels and the Nerve Elements of the Brain of the Insane, and the Morbid Histology of the Spinal Cord in Insanity. His articles reviewing the progress of nervous and mental disease, which regularly appeared in the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science*, showed a wide acquaintance with the literature of his speciality both at home and abroad. He was a Fellow of the Academy of Medicine and a member of the Medico-Psychological Association since 1875. He also assisted Dr. Macnaughton Jones in founding the premier branch of the British Medical Association in Ireland, and in conjunction with him worked hard to make the Cork meeting of the Association a success.

To spend even one hour with Atkins was a liberal education. His thoughts sped swiftly on winged words. Whether forming one of an audience, or, more delightful still, chatting on into the small hours of the morning, one could only feel amazed at the wealth of his information, as he poured forth out of the treasure-house of his marvellous memory things new and old. New—for he kept himself well abreast of the most recent discoveries of science, which he could discuss with an ease and grasp unusual in one who lived so far apart from the great centres of thought; old—for he never was happier than when he was studying, photographing, or describing to friend or audience the ancient relics of hoary antiquity. In every tour he made there was an earnest purpose to fulfil. To enlarge his knowledge, and gain fresh insight into the habits and customs, the architecture, the geological features, the historical associations of the countries he visited, was to him a definite aim. His lectures on such subjects were remarkable for the phenomenal memory which they displayed, and the absence of the slightest falter or hesitation. They were

invariably illustrated by his own exquisite lantern slides, which, as regards technical excellence, were perfect, but had, in addition, an artistic quality which is only rarely noticeable in the work of the professional photographer, and which gave them a peculiar charm. He was an ardent Egyptologist; in fact, it was one of his special studies, and his photographs of the interiors of some of the pyramids, and of hieroglyph and cuneiform inscriptions, are probably some of the best that exist anywhere. His enthusiasm for this branch of archaeology nearly cost him his life on one occasion, when he was all but smothered while exploring the recesses of a pyramid in order to photograph it by magnesium light, a suffocative attack, to which he was at times subject, having come on just at the wrong moment.

There was one other feature in Atkins' many-sided character which must not be omitted from this imperfect sketch, as it coloured his whole life. He was a profoundly religious man. The combination of an ardent love for science with strong religious convictions is not a very common phenomenon in these days. And, perhaps, of all the sciences, psychology least of any tends to encourage stability of belief. Faraday, we know, kept his science and his religion apart. Conscious of the difficulty of reconciling things which often seem hopelessly incompatible, he, as it were, assumed a different mental posture, according as he was engaged with one or the other, and thus, no doubt, escaped mental conflict. With Atkins it was wholly different. In him religion and science were intimately interwoven, and though the former was never aggressively thrust into prominence, it could be seen that it underlay his whole life and conduct. He never seemed to be troubled with doubts or difficulties; possibly he may have had some—who is there that has none—but they did not come to the surface. An explanation of this, perhaps, may be found in the fact that, if we may judge from his writings, his attention was directed rather to the neurological than the psychological aspects of insanity. His mind was so constantly engaged with such concrete subjects as neuro-pathology, clinical observations, asylum administration, &c., his hobbies also being of a practical sort, that he probably gave but little time to the consideration of purely abstract problems, those "obstinate questionings" which have vexed the souls of many, and in not a few have made shipwreck of their faith. His was the large and liberal and eminently practical Christianity which embraces all mankind, and sympathy with suffering of any and every kind was the key-note of his being—a sympathy which always had some outlet in action, whether in administering relief with skilful hands to bodily suffering, or on his knees at the bedside assuaging mental anguish with words of consolation, and binding up the broken heart.

The following tribute from one of those best qualified to speak on this subject may fittingly conclude this outline:—"I did not like the man, I loved him; for his genuine nature, his childlike mind, his great culture. He was a truly disingenuous soul, affectionate, true, sympathetic; a delightful companion, a charming conversationalist. His was the versatile sort of brain. Yet there was both quantity and quality. I knew him as the enthusiastic pupil, the ardent and indefatigable worker, the impulsively warm friend, the keen scientist. I knew him through a period of cloud and sorrow, and his Christian and forgiving spirit. To none a resentful thought, to none a harmful act. One is tempted with Arnold to exclaim, 'Oh, strong soul, by what shore tarriest thou now?' Surely to thee it is given to help, to comfort, to strengthen; and not for ever blotted out is the bright intellect that we knew, and the loving soul that we have lost."

A character deep but translucent; a life simple yet full, not without an element of grandeur. Like the sun of a tropical day our friend has suddenly, alas! passed beyond our visual horizon, and has, we fain would hope, reached the clear daylight of a higher existence, a larger life. The memory of him will not die. On those who mourn his loss—and they are many—there lingers a warm sunset radiance, the afterglow of a noble life, cheering, brightening, elevating, casting the backward reflection of a tender glory over the path he trod, that path of the

just which, we are told, is as "a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Sic itur ad astra.

ERNEST HART.

We deeply regret to chronicle the death of Mr. Ernest Hart. Although his own personal interest lay chiefly in matters connected with Public Health, and his editorial duties led him into every department of Medicine, he was ever alive to the claims of our specialty. In his official capacity as editor of the *British Medical Journal*, and as Chairman of the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association, he was always accessible and willing to lend us a helping hand. Mr. Hart's energy and enterprise were unbounded; his determination to leave the world better than he found it was worthy of all praise. We might object to certain incidents in his career and certain methods in his working; but when the measure of his achievements is reckoned, his mistakes are obliterated by a sense of his personal worth, and the loss which the medical profession has sustained by his death.

THE LIBRARY.

The Library Committee asks for the following to complete sets, viz.—
Reports of the Commissioners in Lunacy for England and Wales for the years 1847, '48, '49, '64, and '74.
Reports of the Scottish Commissioners, Nos. 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 18.
American Journal of Insanity for the year 1886.
Archives de Neurologie for the years 1874-5-6-7, and 1887.
L'Encephale, from 1888.
Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie. Complete set wanted.
Annales Médico-Psychologique, 1864-5-6.

NOTICES BY THE REGISTRAR.

At the examination for the certificate in Psychological Medicine held on December 16th, 1897, the following candidates were successful:

Examined at *Bethlehem Royal Hospital, London*.—Oscar Bernard Goldschmidt, William John Handfield Haslett, Robert Hughes, George McGregor.

Examined at the *Royal Asylum, Morningside, Edinburgh*.—Charles Cromhall Easterbrook, G. Landsborough Findlay, Donald A. Macvean.

Examined at the *District Asylum, Cork*.—Lucia Strangman.

The following is a list of the questions which appeared on the paper:

1. How would you treat persistent insomnia (*a*) in passive melancholia; (*b*) in melancholia with excessive bodily movement; (*c*) in acute mania? 2. What forms of mental disease are associated with a previous history of syphilis? How far do you consider general paralysis of the insane to be due to syphilis? 3. Enumerate the principal varieties of mental disease arising from alcoholic excess, and give the distinguishing physical symptoms of each variety. 4. Give examples of mental and physical causes of refusal of food, the prognosis in each, and the indications for treatment. 5. Distinguish between idiocy, imbecility, dementia, and stupor, and give the best recognised classification of idiocy. 6. Compare the changes in the brain cells which have been described as characteristic respectively of parietic, senile, and alcoholic dementia. To which conjecture as to the mode of origin of these respective changes do you incline, and why?

The next examination will be held in July, 1898.