

**William Johnson Sollas, M.A., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.**

WILLIAM JOHNSON SOLLAS, who died on October 20, 1936, was one of our senior Fellows, having joined this Society in 1880. As a geologist he was distinguished for his versatility and brilliance. He was born in Birmingham in 1849 and went to the City of London School, from which he entered the School of Mines and studied under Huxley and Ramsay. Thereafter he passed into St John's College, Cambridge, and graduated in the Natural Sciences Tripos, with first-class honours, in 1873. He afterwards became a Fellow of St John's. In 1879 he was Professor of Geology in University College, Bristol; in 1883 he was Professor of Geology in Trinity College, Dublin. In 1897 he succeeded Professor Green at Oxford, and for thirty-nine years he was leader of the Oxford school of geology.

As a palæontologist he did very important and original work on various groups of invertebrates, but his special field of study was the fossil sponges, and he made important contributions to our knowledge of their anatomy and classification. Especially notable was his development of the method of studying fossils by grinding down the specimens and making photographs and accurate sketches of the successive sections thus exposed. In this way, for example, he investigated the Scottish fossil fish *Palæospondylus*. In petrology he wrote important papers on the Wicklow Granite and the Carlingford Complex; he also improved the methods of separating minerals in heavy liquids by means of their specific gravities. In mineralogy he wrote some brilliant papers on the structure of micas in which he advanced ingenious theories on the arrangement and structure of their molecules. He wrote on glaciation and the eskers of Ireland, and he took an important part in the study of coral reefs, having started a boring in the Ellice Islands, which was afterwards carried to completion by Edgeworth David. Subsequently he directed his attention to Palæolithic Man in Britain. He explored the Paviland Cave, and wrote some well-known books on early man and his surroundings. When his daughter, Miss Hertha Sollas, translated Suess's monumental work *The Face of the Earth*, Sollas superintended the work, and together they produced a masterly translation which has earned the gratitude of all British students of geology and geography. In every field in which he worked his success was outstanding. *Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*. He was a scholar of the widest range, an investigator as indefatigable as he was ingenious, a man of the broadest sympathies and of the most genial personality, and throughout his long life his devotion to scientific work earned him the sincere and hearty admiration of every British geologist.

J. S. F.