

OBITUARY.

George William Lamplugh, F.R.S., F.G.S., F.R.G.S.

BORN 8TH APRIL, 1859.

DIED 9TH OCTOBER, 1926.

The death of George W. Lamplugh removes one of the best known and most popular figures among English geologists. A sketch of his life was published in the *GEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE* of August, 1918, with a portrait and a list of his published works to that date. He was then President of the Geological Society (1918-20). In his two Anniversary Addresses he dealt in masterly style with two subjects which he had made his own, the Structure of the Weald and the Glaciation of England. In July, 1920, he quitted the Geological Survey, to which he had been attached for twenty-eight years. In his retirement at St. Albans he kept alive his active interest in geological affairs and, until his health broke, continued to take part in the meetings at Burlington House. In 1925 he received the award of the Wollaston Medal as an expression of the high estimate placed upon his services to the science. His latter days were clouded by suffering, bravely endured, and his life closed in October last, in his sixty-eighth year.

So ends a notable career. Lamplugh was eminently one of Nature's geologists, born, not made. Save for a few excursions in the field with Dakyns and others, he was wholly self-taught. The faculty of observation and the capacity for patient labour were innate; the rest came from study in the field, to which he devoted all the time that was his own after his work in a merchant's office at Bridlington. Turning naturally to what lay nearest to hand, he attacked first the problem of the Glacial deposits of Holderness, and then the Cretaceous strata exposed in the cliffs of Flamborough and Speeton. Though in after years the scope of his researches was, of course, much widened, Glacial geology and the stratigraphy and palaeontology of the Cretaceous continued to be his ruling interests. His ardour for the former was quickened by his travels through the United States and Canada in 1884, when he studied the American drift deposits and the great glaciers of Alaska and the Rocky Mountains.

It had long been Lamplugh's ambition to make geology the work of his life, but it was not until 1892 that a chance was presented. Sir Archibald Geikie, ever with a keen eye for the right man, offered him a place on the Geological Survey. The prospect demanded some sacrifice, and indeed, for a married man with young children, some risk, for the pay of an Assistant-Geologist was in those days on a level with that of a dock labourer. Lamplugh, however, took his

courage in both hands, and he never afterwards regretted his decision. The Isle of Man, to which he was first assigned, introduced him to a side of geology new to his experience; but he soon found a pleasure in studying the detailed structures of the Manx Slates and deciphering the evidence of successive crust-movements in that complicated area. The memoir in which his results were embodied is indeed a model of what such a monograph should be.

In 1901, with the title of District-Geologist, he was chosen to take charge of the Irish branch of the Survey. Circumstances made this no easy post. Lamplugh's tact and judgment, and a sympathetic insight into human nature, made the best of a difficult situation, but it is safe to say that the years spent in Dublin were not the happiest of his life. From there he was transferred first to the Midlands, and then to the Denbighshire district, until, in 1914, he was made Assistant-Director in London. His new duties were largely administrative, but allowed him still to keep in touch with the field-work which he loved. He found some opportunity also for foreign travel, visiting America (for the third time), South Africa (including the gorge and falls of the Zambesi), Sweden, Spitzbergen, and Australia.

To a man in whom the social instinct was strong, life in London was welcome as bringing him into closer touch with fellow-workers in various lines. He frequented the meetings of the Royal Society, the Geological, and the Royal Geographical, and took a genial part in many less formal gatherings. Lamplugh was always good company. His entire freedom from pretence and pose put him at once on easy terms with all sorts and conditions of men who brought with them a like sincerity. Enthusiastic geologist as he was, he never allowed his chosen profession to fill the whole of his life. He had read widely, and formed his own opinions of books and men. Independence of judgment was controlled by a shrewd common sense, which perhaps owed something to his early business training. A certain underlying quality of broad humanity in the man found expression in a direct style of speech, which did not disdain homely metaphor, and in a native humour, which had occasionally a sub-acid flavour, but always stopped short of the malicious. Only some sham or obliquity could provoke a sterner note.

Upon the value of Lamplugh's services to geology it is not necessary to enlarge, but one characteristic should not pass without notice. Having begun life as an amateur geologist in the country, with little help from outside, he never ceased to take a lively and practical interest in the doings of other amateurs. His frequent visits to provincial societies in Yorkshire and elsewhere have done much to stimulate local research; and to many keen geologists, whose own opportunities are circumscribed, this will seem not the least of his claims to grateful remembrance.