

is not merely a tribute of filial affection, but is a memorial of a very useful, valuable and irreproachable life, and we may pray that God may make it serve His purpose in ways beyond our reckoning, stimulating those who look upon it to uprightness and self-dedication to the good of mankind. Of the inmost recesses of his heart and of family I may not pretend to speak, but you who loved him dearly, who manifest your love and reverence in this pictured window, will dwell on the beloved memory when you sing that hymn to the God of Love (set to tune by Newington), on the words, 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels.'

'Thine for ever! oh, how blest  
They who find in Thee their rest,  
Saviour, Guardian, Heavenly Friend,  
O defend us to the end.'"

The service concluded with the hymn "Thine for ever, God of Love" (Newington) and the Blessing.

#### OBITUARY.

DAVID GEORGE THOMSON, *C.B.E.*, M.D., C.M.Edin.

THE characteristics that mark a man whose life has been distinguished in science, in art, in literature, in commerce, or in other vocations are numerous; in some the creative idea that is called genius, in others the knowledge of men and the method of moulding them by which Andrew Carnegie believed he achieved greatness. There is again the type that struggles against difficulties and finds its niche in the Temple of Fame by dogged purpose.

The subject of these lines had perhaps all, perhaps none of these, but in his personality there stood out one great and obvious trait—energy. Energy that he applied to whatever came to his hand; most keenly, doubtless, in his work; in joy of the open road; the water-ways of his beloved adopted country; in photography and music.

David George Thomson, the eldest of seven sons of the late Thomas Thomson, of Princes Street, Edinburgh, was born in 1856, and was educated successively at the Collegiate, Dunkirk, and Dresden. His original intention was to take dentistry as his profession, although his love of the sea and utter fearlessness seemed to mark him out as a merchant adventurer. While still a lad, in company with his inseparable companion, William Burton, he went round the West Coast of Scotland in a canoe they had built themselves, facing and surmounting the dangers, but having many narrow escapes.

Fortunately for psychiatry, he decided, owing largely to the number of friends who were medical students, to give up the idea of becoming a dentist, and to study physic. Incidentally, a younger brother, Alexis, followed in his footsteps, and is now the distinguished surgeon and professor in the University of Edinburgh.

Thomson showed no exceptional brilliance during his University days, but this was due, doubtless, to his hobbies—photography, boat-building, music, conjuring; their name was legion—and his many-sided life left insufficient time to study for Class Honours. However, he graduated in 1878, and was highly commended for his thesis when taking the M.D. three years later.

Being one of many children, it behove him to earn his living immediately after qualification, and he applied for and was appointed Assistant Medical Officer under Mr. Murray Lindsay at the Derby County Asylum, Mickleover. Within a year he came to London to take up a similar post at Camberwell House. Here, as he has often told the writer, he first found the opportunity to study administration, as his work and responsibilities covered a wider field than could have fallen to his lot in a public institution. At that time, Dr. Paul, a father of the Medico-Psychological Association, and for thirty-four years its Treasurer, was his chief, and through him he met the man who then, and in the after days, stood as his friend and adviser, Dr. D. Hack-Tuke.

Thomson, during the three or four years he spent at Camberwell House, left a memory of boisterous good spirits, amazing activity (it is said that he never took less than three steps at a time going up the main staircase), and those more permanent records, case-book notes, which, for accuracy and detail, not wholly

unspiced by wit, set an example for those who followed him. But Thomson left something better: memories of kindly acts, of loyalty to colleagues, the giving of his best to those he worked for and with. Thirty years after he left his name was still mentioned affectionately by more than one of the older residents, and it is recalled of a certain old dame who regularly submitted to his judgment her ailments, no pill that could be devised stimulating her liver so gently as his particular formula.

On the completion of the new Surrey County Asylum at Cane Hill, Dr. Thomson was one of the selected candidates for the post of Senior Assistant Medical Officer. While awaiting the ordeal of the interview with the electing committee, he received a visit from Dr. (afterwards Sir) James Moody, the Medical Superintendent. The two men had not previously met, and Thomson surmised that Moody was one of his rivals. The latter started a conversation by asking, "Well, who's going to get the job?" Thomson slapped him heartily on the back and said, "Why, you, old chap, of course." How far this reply influenced the election is unknown, but certain it is that he was appointed.

But further promotion was not to be long delayed. Towards the end of 1886 he was elected Medical Superintendent of the Norfolk County Asylum, and here for no less than thirty-five years he worked indefatigably until he finally laid aside the reins of office a few months only before his death. His earlier days at Thorpe, however, were unsettled ones; he doubted the wisdom of the step he had taken. The transition from a hospital which might be regarded as the last word both as to its structure and equipment to one that, while it could boast of an antiquity second to none, had probably little else to its chief's liking; and Thomson cast his eyes Londonwards, when a vacancy arose at the Middlesex County Asylum. But his friends reasoned with him, and Dr. Hack-Tuke in particular persuaded him that a greater scope lay in the modernisation and readaption of an old institution, and that he was the man to do it. Of the changes and additions to the old building during his term of office no reference need be made here, and it would convey a false impression, perhaps, that Dr. Thomson was a "brick and mortar superintendent." His claim to distinction lies rather in his unflinching interest in the higher training of the nursing staff, and the granting of increased facilities for the study of mental disorders and pathological research by the assistant medical officers.

The year that ushered in the World War was the Centenary of the Norfolk County Asylum, and appropriately enough Dr. Thomson was elected to the Presidency of the Medico-Psychological Association at the Annual Meeting held at Norwich. In his address he gave a masterly review of the progress of treatment of the insane in this country, with special reference to the development of his own mental hospital. Little could he have foreseen the incredible happenings that were to come to Thorpe within a few months—happenings that put him into uniform with the rank of Lieut.-Colonel, and the control of a war hospital of 2,428 beds, and, in all, more than 44,000 cases to be treated by him and his staff. As if this were not enough for a man who had now reached his 60th year, Colonel Thomson had laid upon him the supervision of all the auxiliary military hospitals in the county, taking the responsibility of general administration and supply. Apparently he stood the strain, but his tall spare form grew gaunter, and it is very certain that his life was shortened by those years of stress when he gave of his best in his country's need.

Towards the end of 1919 the hospital was demobilised and Colonel Thomson relinquished his commission, retaining his rank, being afterwards decorated with the C.B.E. He should then forthwith have gone into the retirement he had so well earned, his better judgment told him to, and Dr. David Rice, of Hellesdon, his intimate friend of many years, urged this step on him; but the desire to hand over his hospital to his successor only after it had been swept and furbished and the insistent entreaties of his committee overrode wiser councils. It was not until the end of April, 1922, that he could feel his work was at last done, and that he was free to rest—at least, as far as any such active mind can do. He accepted on leaving Thorpe the appointment of medical adviser to the Mental Deficiency Acts Committee of the Norfolk County Council, remaining also as Honorary Consulting Physician to the National Association for the care of the Feeble-minded.

Apart from our own society he was a loyal and hard worker for the British Medical Association. For many years he acted as Secretary to his Division, he sat upon the Council, and was, in 1909, President of the East Anglian Branch.

It was hoped that with the release from the anxieties of responsibility his health would have improved, and that the distraction of the houseboat moored on Hickling Broad, which he had built; of music and carpentry, both of which he loved; could have given him the interests so necessary to one of his vigour, but it was not to be. There were grave warnings of illness in November last, and although he rallied and was able to spend Christmas with his son-in-law at Lingwood Lodge, near Norwich, yet the end came soon after, and he died peacefully on January 4th, leaving a widow, son and daughter to mourn and to honour his memory.

How will Thomson be remembered? He stands in the annals of the Medico-Psychological Association as its President, who held office for the unexampled term of four years. By its older members, as the cheery companion and sage councillor. By the juniors, as one who consistently pressed for the improvement of the conditions of service and the increased opportunities for them of post-graduate study leave. The county of Norfolk will recall him as the man under whose expert advice their asylum was modernised, and truly converted into a Hospital for the Mind. The Division of the British Medical Association will not forget that, though standing somewhat outside their ordinary interests and anxieties, he held high office by their suffrage, and loyally and zealously fought their battles and safeguarded their status.

One need not, however, say more. To those who never knew him it is not possible, at least with this pen, to portray the man, and to those of us who did, it is unnecessary. Near by the writer stands an ancient sun-dial, and inscribed on it one reads, "To-day's work, to-day." That was David George Thomson's rule.

FRANCIS H. EDWARDS.

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#### NOTICES BY THE REGISTRAR.

##### THE PRIZE DISSERTATION.

The Bronze Medal of the Association and Ten Guineas Prize for 1922, have been awarded to W. S. Dawson, M.A., M.D., B.Ch.Oxon., M.R.C.P.Lond., Assistant Medical Officer, The Maudsley Hospital, London, S.E., for an essay named "A Study of the Endocrine-Autonomic Disorders of Dementia Præcox" (*vide* p. 182).

A special prize of £5 has been awarded to R. D. Gillespie, M.B., Ch.B.Glas., Second Assistant Medical Officer, Glasgow Royal Asylum, Gartnavel, for an essay named "Epidemic Encephalitis: Some Psychological Sequelæ."

Essays in competition for this Prize for 1923 should be forwarded to the Registrar not later than June 15th. Each dissertation is to be distinguished by a motto or device, and accompanied by a sealed envelope containing identity and address of the author and marked by the motto or device adopted.

##### THE GASKELL PRIZE.

Examinations for the Certificate in Psychological Medicine and the Gaskell Prize will be held in London about fourteen days prior to the annual meeting. The definite date will be circularised shortly.

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#### NOTICES OF MEETINGS.

*Annual Meeting.*—Commence on July 9, 1923, in London.

*Quarterly Meeting.*—May 24, 1923, at the Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, London.

*South-Western Division.*—April 19, 1923, at the Cardiff City Mental Hospital, Whitchurch, Glam.

*Northern and Midland Division.*—April 26, 1923, at the Cheshire County Mental Hospital, Macclesfield.

*Scottish Division.*—November 16, 1923.

*Irish Division.*—April 26, 1923, at St. Patrick's Hospital, James's Street, Dublin.