

OBITUARY.

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(MEMBER.)

In the death of Mr. T. W. Thompson, at the early age of 44, the science of Epidemiology has lost one of its foremost representatives; indeed, few men's minds were better fitted than Mr. Thompson's to approach in a proper scientific spirit the etiological problems with which, by virtue of his official position, he was brought in contact. Before Mr. Thompson devoted his life to Sanitary science he had had an extensive and somewhat varied experience, an experience which served him in especially good stead in the more matter-of-fact administrative part of his official duties; while his love for the study of philosophy, to which he had devoted his spare moments from an early age, doubtless did much to engender in him that remarkable lucidity of expression and power of developing an argument, which was so characteristic of his reports and writings. After receiving his professional education at University College Hospital, and holding sundry resident appointments at other hospitals, Mr. Thompson studied at Netley, and eventually served with the Royal Horse Artillery in the Madras Presidency. A serious illness, however, cut short his stay in India, and on his restoration to health he was appointed to the high position of Surgeon to the First Life Guards. This post Mr. Thompson held for some five years, at the end of which time he married, and entered private practice at Potter's Bar. In practice he was eminently successful; indeed, he became universally beloved and respected in the neighbourhood, a fact which is borne evidence to by the handsome testimonials presented to him on his relinquishing private practice, and by the many and beautiful tokens of deep affection which were manifest when his numerous friends and colleagues bade their last tribute to his memory in the little country churchyard in Hertfordshire. While in practice Mr. Thompson contributed a valuable paper to the "Lancet," which showed that he possessed in a high degree scientific methods of thought, and that he had besides considerable literary ability; and during the same time he wrote an anonymous essay entitled "The New Conservatism," in which he discussed, in an exceptionally able manner, the philosophical aspect of certain political attitudes, adopting a somewhat similar line of argument to that which is taken by Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his admirable work on "The Man *versus* the State." It is necessary to mention this essay in anything approaching a thoughtful sketch of Mr. Thompson, but it must

in justice be stated that he was free from anything approaching political partizanship, and that he would have recognised how fatal is the political bias to the carrying out of any system of sociology. Although, as has been said, Mr. Thompson was in every way successful in practice, his nature seems to have prompted him to seek a sphere of activity in which he would have occupation of a somewhat more scientific character than was possible in a busy practice; and, taking the Diploma of Public Health, he obtained the appointment of Medical Officer of Health for the combined Sanitary districts of Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

In the Public Health Service Mr. Thompson in all probability found himself in an environment congenial to his tastes and stimulating to his talents, and it was not long before it became evident to the Medical Department of the Local Government Board that he was a worker and thinker of no ordinary type; and an experience of his services as a temporary Inspector soon led to his being appointed permanently to the staff of the Medical Department. It would ill become the present writer to speak in detail of Mr. Thompson's services under the Local Government Board, but it may be observed that the late and present Chiefs of the Medical Department entertained the highest respect for his great abilities, and entrusted him with enquiries of a highly responsible nature. Mr. Thompson's death is a heavy loss to the Medical Department, and the memory of his manly presence and honest attractive nature will remain with his colleagues long after his name has been removed from the official lists. At the beginning of the present decade Mr. Thompson was asked by the editors of Stevenson and Murphy's "Treatise on Hygiene and Public Health" to contribute the Section on "The Natural History of Infectious Diseases," a task which he performed to the greatest satisfaction of every one, save perhaps himself; indeed, in the introductory chapter to that monograph Mr. Thompson applied the thesis of organic evolution to the varying manifestations of infectious disease in a most masterly fashion, and it was truthfully said of this Section by the "Lancet" review, that Mr. Thompson succeeded better than any other writer in the English language in conveying a faithful picture of what is known of the epidemiology of each of the principal infectious diseases. To have performed a work of this order of merit is something to have lived for, and on this score alone Sanitary science owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. Thompson's memory. The subject of "return" cases of scarlet fever was always a matter of much interest to Mr. Thompson, and in the autumn of last year he read before the Epidemiological Society of London a valuable

and suggestive paper upon this subject, which was published in full in the "Lancet" of November 25th, 1895. Mr. Thompson died while actively engaged on an important Sanitary survey in the counties of Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire, and the manner of his death was in a sense characteristic of his life's work. He was taken suddenly ill while travelling to the scene of his day's work, but he insisted on proceeding with his inspectorial duties until he was absolutely unable to return even to the neighbouring town at which he was staying with his wife, who it may be added was his constant companion in his travels, and in a large sense his co-worker. In the course of thirty-six hours Mr. Thompson passed away in the little village inn to which he was taken; but his notes were found in so complete a state that the Local Government Board will, it is hoped, be able to publish the report upon which he was engaged. Of Mr. Thompson's lovable and attractive personality it will be out of place to speak here. Those who had the high privilege of intellectual communion with him cannot forget him, and those who had not that privilege must judge him, as he fain would have been judged, by his works.

H. TIMBRELL BULSTRODE.

MR. W. P. BUCHAN

(ASSOCIATE).

W. P. Buchan was born at Fraserburgh (Aberdeenshire), on 7th Dec., 1836. It was intended that he should study for a clerical or medical career, but his bent was found to be towards mechanics in some form or other. At the age of sixteen he was apprenticed to Messrs. White and Henderson who carried on business in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. This firm was one of the leading plumbers of the city and had acquired considerable reputation by the introduction of hot water into tenement dwelling houses, which at the time was considered to be a wonderful advance in houses of this kind.

Mr. Buchan having finished his apprenticeship and improved his knowledge of kindred subjects by attending the evening classes, started business on his own account in 1860. He continued to devote his attention to ventilation in addition to drainage, and in particular he recognised the immense value of a good trap for house drains. He patented what is known as "Buchan's trap," and by lectures and writing upon