

## OBITUARY NOTICES.

**James Hartley Ashworth, D.Sc., F.R.S.**

JAMES HARTLEY ASHWORTH was born at Accrington on May 2, 1874, and was brought up in Burnley, Lancashire. He went to Carlton Road School, which no longer exists, but which was a famous school for science in its day. In 1892 Ashworth entered Owens College, meaning to study chemistry; but he presently turned to zoology, under the inspiration of two excellent teachers, Professor A. Milnes Marshall and Dr C. H. Hurst. When Milnes Marshall died he was succeeded by Professor Sydney Hickson, and Ashworth, still an undergraduate, came under the influence of yet another distinguished and influential zoologist. He won the Dalton Prize for Natural History at Owens College; he graduated B.Sc. of London University with Honours in Zoology and Botany in 1895; he became Demonstrator and Assistant Lecturer in Zoology at Owens; and he obtained the D.Sc. of London University in 1899.

Ashworth's love of marine zoology had already led him to Sinel's Laboratory in Jersey, to Herdman's Laboratory at Port Erin in the Isle of Man, and to McIntosh's Gatty Laboratory at St Andrews; then, in 1900, with large knowledge and experience, he went for the first time to Dohrn's Stazione Zoologica at Naples, at the height of its prosperity and usefulness. He owed much to his stay at Naples, and repaid the debt handsomely by a lifelong interest in the Station; he became Chairman of the British Association Committee connected with it, and held that office till his death. On leaving Naples Ashworth had the choice of a Museum appointment or a post in the University of Edinburgh; he preferred to be a teacher, and chose the university life. So he came to Edinburgh in 1900 as Assistant, and in the following year was made Lecturer in Invertebrate Zoology; in the same year he married Clara, daughter of William Hough, J.P., of Burnley. Ashworth called himself a Burnley man, and was proud to do so; he was an old friend of that great and famous Burnley man, Sir James Mackenzie; two other well-known zoologists besides Ashworth, Professor J. E. Duerden and the late Dr John Stephenson, and the wives of all three, came from the same Lancashire town.

Four years after he came to Edinburgh the University instituted a Diploma in Tropical Medicine, and Ashworth was asked to organise classes in entomology and parasitology. No such courses had ever been given in a British University until Ashworth, with characteristic enthusiasm, conceived and planned the work, and assembled the copious material required to illustrate it. He never ceased to improve and augment this material, and its present extent and variety are a signal instance of the thoroughness with which he carried out the tasks he put his hand to. He became Lecturer in Medical Entomology, Parasitology, and afterwards Helminthology; this course led on to the Diploma in Public Health, and (in 1930) to the Diploma in Tropical Veterinary Medicine. Of recent years the growth of the Department of Zoology has given much of this work to special lecturers; but Ashworth always exercised a close supervision, and continued to deliver part of the lectures himself. The courses made a great reputation, and attracted students from all parts of the country and from overseas. Many students kept up a connection with the Department, and showed their gratitude and their affection by sending specimens from many parts of the world.

In 1919 Ashworth was appointed to a new Chair of Zoology, Professor Cossar Ewart remaining in charge of the Vertebrata while Professor Ashworth took over the Invertebrates, including the courses above described, and also supervised the laboratories. Cossar Ewart resigned in 1927, and then Ashworth was transferred and promoted to the old Chair of Natural History. On his appointment to the Chair of Zoology, Ashworth had set to work at once to improve the conditions, old-fashioned and utterly inadequate, under which the Department was struggling to do its work. A generous gift from Mr Laurence Pullar of Bridge of Earn, a personal friend of Ashworth's and a liberal helper of science, formed the nucleus of a building fund; and Ashworth visited many universities at home and abroad, chiefly in America, to gather ideas for his new laboratories.

The Rockefeller Foundation, known as the International Education Board, made a grant of £76,000. With Sir Robert Lorimer and Mr J. F. Matthew as architects, and with all Ashworth's enthusiasm and accumulated experience given to the details of construction and equipment, the building soon took shape, and was opened by His Royal Highness Prince George in May 1929; only those who have had the good fortune to work in it know how admirably it is adapted to serve its ends. The post-graduate courses which he established, and the laboratories which he planned and built, remain as Ashworth's monumental contributions to the advancement of Zoology in the University, and by a resolution of the

University Court, the building will henceforth bear his name and be entitled the Ashworth Laboratory.

Ashworth's incessant labours as teacher and organiser left him little time for investigations of his own; nevertheless his actual output of papers was not inconsiderable. His first publications (1898–1900) were on the Xeniidæ, a family of the Alcyonaria, of which large group his chief, Professor Sydney Hickson, was a leading authority. About the same time he began, along with F. W. Gamble (afterwards Professor at Birmingham), to work at the Arenicolidæ, or Lobworms, a family on which he published a long series of papers, including a memoir on the "Giant Nerve-cells and Fibres of *Halla Parthenopeia*" (*Phil. Trans.*, 1909), and a "Catalogue of the Arenicolidæ in the British Museum" (1912). Alone or with others he published nine papers in the *Proceedings* and five in the *Transactions* of this Society, among them being well-known papers on the Larvæ of *Lingula* and of *Pelagodiscus*, on *Sclerocheilus*, and on *Rhinosporidium seeberi*. We have not forgotten the charming address which he delivered to us last October, on "Charles Darwin as a Student in Edinburgh." Ashworth received our Keith Medal in 1916, and was elected F.R.S. in the following year.

Ashworth joined the Royal Physical Society in 1901, served for many years on the Council, was twice Vice-President, and finally President of the Society in 1918–21. He took an active interest in the Scottish Zoological Society. He was also an active member of the British Association, where he served for many years as Secretary and Recorder of Section D, and was President of the Section in 1923; he was one of the local Secretaries when the Association met in Edinburgh in 1921.

He became a Fellow of this Society in 1911; and after serving several times on the Council, and twice as Vice-President, he was appointed General Secretary in 1933, a position which he held at the time of his death. So for twenty-four years, with two short breaks, he served upon our Council—a remarkable record of long and most faithful service.

Ashworth was a social and hospitable man; he had the golden gift of making friends, nor did he forget the old friends when he had found the new. He was a kindly and a helpful man, considerate of others, in sympathy with the young, giving always of his best, never counting the cost, unsparing of his strength, and working to the end. On the last day of his life (February 3, 1936) his friend and guest, Professor H. S. Jennings of Johns Hopkins, read a paper to the Society. Ashworth was in his place as General Secretary, and performed his duties with his unvarying and punctilious care; in the evening he dined and made merry with a certain Fellowship in our Rooms; by the morning he had

gone hence, and his place knew him no more. "Death broke at once the vital chain, and freed his soul the nearest way." And so he parted from his friends, without the sadness of farewell.

See also *Obituary Notices of Fellows of the Royal Society*, vol. ii, No. 5, 1936.

D. W. T. and C. H. O'D.