

## Obituary.

JOHN WHITAKER HULKE, F.R.S.

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

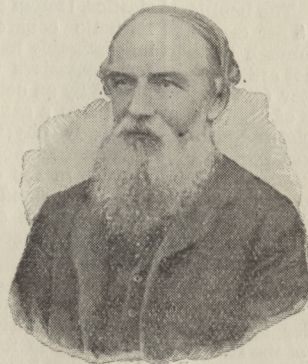
It is a singular and melancholy coincidence that in so short a space of time as fifteen months the titular heads in this country of the two branches of the art of medicine should have died in office. It is but fifteen months since we chronicled the death of Sir Andrew Clark, which occurred on November 6th, 1893, during his tenure of the Presidency of the Royal College of Physicians of London; and now the medical profession not only of this country, but of all countries, has learned with deep concern of the death of Mr. Hulke, the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and senior surgeon to the Middlesex Hospital. The coincidence to which we have referred is accentuated by the curious fact that Sir Andrew Clark died on Mr. Hulke's birthday.

There are some men whose lives are the despair of their biographers, but this is not generally the case with the distinguished surgeon. Widely read the surgeon often is, cultured it is now the rule that he must be, but his scheme of life, the issues that he has at stake, the work that he does, and the work that he hopes to do are not usually complex, so that his public life is wont to be comparatively easy to write. It consists of a record of duties performed whose value is estimated by comparison with the performances of others. But this is not so in the case of Mr. Hulke. For Mr. Hulke was a many-sided man, so that to estimate him properly more than a mere regard to the particular eminence to which he attained in his branch of the science of healing is required. Viewed as a surgeon Mr. Hulke had a career of singular distinction as well as of wide range. But he was also one of the first geologists in England. He was a real linguist—one with the gift of tongues. While keeping up a more than ordinary acquaintance with the classics, he was a fluent and accurate French and German scholar, a learned Shakespearian, and possessed at the same time of a working knowledge of Italian. He was a first-rate botanist, both in lecture-room and field—as may sufficiently well be seen from the opening half of the Hunterian Oration, which we print in our issue to-day, but which his health did not allow him to deliver. He was a sportsman of the old-fashioned sort, making his pursuit of the prey with rod or gun subservient to his desire to acquire accurate knowledge. And he had acquired it to this extent, that he was a distinctly learned ornithologist. He was an excellent diagrammatic artist, painted in water-colours, and was not unskilled in plastic work. As we have said, it is not easy to write a biography of such a man, for he excelled in so many directions that to narrate them all must give to his biography an appearance of fulsomeness.

John Whitaker Hulke was born on Nov. 6th, 1830, being the elder son of a well-known and widely respected general practitioner at Deal. The original family name was Hulcher, his ancestors being Dutch by origin, who had escaped from Holland during the Spanish persecutions under Philip II. and Ferdinand, Duke of Alva, and settled on the Kentish coast. There for some two hundred years they have followed the vocation of medicine. He was educated at

King's College School, and after a sojourn in Germany entered at the age of nineteen the medical school of that institution, where he was dresser to Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Bowman, and house surgeon to Sir William Fergusson. It was while he occupied this position that he attended the Duke of Wellington in his last illness, his father being the Duke's regular medical attendant and obtaining leave to avail himself of his son's services as assistant. In 1854, when the Crimean War broke out, he was early to volunteer, and at the beginning of 1855 was appointed assistant surgeon to the British Civil Hospital at Smyrna. Thence he was sent to Sebastopol, and in that awful campaign of irremediable sickness, gross mismanagement, and gallantry as often as not ineffective, bore himself in the opinion of everyone as a soldier should bear himself. On his return from the East he became medical tutor of King's College Hospital, and having previously been made a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England was appointed in 1858 assistant surgeon to Moorfields Hospital, and in this early devotion to ophthalmology we can trace the influence of his distinguished master, Sir William Bowman. He had previously been elected assistant surgeon to King's College Hospital, under an absurd arrangement by which the term of office of the assistant staff was limited to five years. He duly served his allotted period, and was appointed, together with Murchison, a colleague at King's, to the Middlesex Hospital, of which institution he was the senior surgeon at the time of his death.

Such is the bare outline of Mr. Hulke's career as a surgeon; we now propose to consider this a little more in detail. His earliest mark was made in ophthalmology. He obtained the Jacksonian Prize of the Royal College of Surgeons of England for an essay on the Morbid Changes of the Retina; his treatise on the Use of the Ophthalmoscope, published as far back as 1861, formed an excellent introduction for most of the profession to the new system of intra-ocular examination; his Arris and Gale Lectures delivered before the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and subsequently published in our columns, dealt with the Minute Anatomy of the Eye; and, lastly, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in recognition of the value of his papers on the Anatomy of the Retina in Amphibia and Reptiles. But although



JOHN WHITAKER HULKE.

so highly and widely recognised as an authority on the eye, Mr. Hulke was no less esteemed by the profession as a general surgeon, and the record of his work in the wards of Middlesex Hospital remains a monument to his skill and patience. There are no brilliant departures associated with his name, but he was absolutely painstaking and wise, and quick to see what surgical movements would stand the test of time. He was a supporter of aseptic doctrines at a time when many surgeons of his date were but half converted to these doctrines, and he was to a certain extent a pioneer in cerebral surgery, though all the teaching of his masters must have biased him to look upon interference with the brain as a very serious matter. As an operator he was not showy, and perhaps not entirely free from the imputation of being a little slow, but he was admirably careful, and his intimate anatomical knowledge counted for something in the marked caution of his procedure. As a clinical teacher he had few, if any, equals in London. He was lucid, learned, and simple. Where a point required exposition he was certain to know everything that could be said, but he was never tempted into needless display of erudition, and never talked for talking's sake. He was a little intolerant of ignorance in his pupils, but the idlest and most irreverent student always saw in him a man who had a right to be intolerant if he chose.



We have briefly referred to Mr. Hulke's knowledge of botany, but his position as a geologist merits more extended mention. He was one of the first authorities in the world on vertebrate palæontology, and contributed many valuable papers dealing with the Iguanodontia, Ichthyosauria, and Crocodilia to the memoirs of the Geological Society. For three years, from 1882 to 1884, he was President of the Geological Society; in 1887 he received the Wollaston gold medal, which is the highest award it is in the power of the society to bestow; and in 1890 and 1891 he acted as the society's foreign secretary. He has left behind him a large collection of specimens, mostly excavated by his own hands from the Undercliff in the Isle of Wight.

Few men have held more official posts than Mr. Hulke. At the time of his death he was President of the Clinical Society of London. It may not be out of place to repeat here the words of the retiring President, Sir Dyce Duckworth, when inducting his successor: "You have elected to-night as my successor one whom we all respect and acknowledge as a master of the surgical art, one whose modesty, rectitude, and fearlessness are only equalled by his skill and kindness of heart. Mr. Hulke will, I feel sure, add lustre to the post he comes to fill." From 1886 to 1887 he was President of the Ophthalmological Society, and he had also been President of the Pathological Society of London, and had been for many years, and was at the time of his death, librarian of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society. He was elected President of the Royal College of Surgeons, England, in 1893, in succession to Mr. Bryant, having been a vice-president from 1888. He was a member of the Court of Examiners for ten years from 1880. His greatest work in connexion with the Royal College of Surgeons was undoubtedly the formation of the Research Laboratory of the Conjoint Board. The scheme for this was Mr. Hulke's, and he was chairman of the Joint Laboratories Committee from its foundation. The work that has been done and is now doing there speaks sufficiently for the wisdom of the scheme. At the Royal Society—of which he was elected a Fellow in 1867—he served on the Council during 1879, 1880, 1888, and 1889; and was also a member of the Scientific Relief Committee. His communications to the Transactions of the society were numerous, and the last of them was read before the society on May 12th, 1892. It was a paper on the Shoulder-girdle in Ichthyosauria and Saurpterygia, in which he controverted the views of Professor H. G. Seeley.

Such was his arduous and many-sided work, and on all of it he brought the same qualities to bear—punctuality, the prudence of critical insight, and extreme conscientiousness. As a hospital surgeon he was always in attendance, always in time, and always thorough in his ward work. At the College of Surgeons he was never known to miss a lecture or to be a minute late. He attended every sub-committee and with unflinching punctuality. He was a man of very strict character, exhibiting not infrequently an austerity that amounted to harshness. Deeply religious, his Protestantism was of an intolerant kind; and of a relentless probity of character, his judgments now and again seemed unnecessarily severe. Yet many knew that he had another side to his character, and that, in addition to the rectitude and energy which gained him the universal and marked esteem of the whole profession, he possessed softer and more endearing qualities. He was exceedingly gentle and sympathetic with his patients, never for a moment lapsing into the attitude of the operator towards the subject. His acts of great personal kindness were numerous and his charitable desire to do good undoubted. We came into contact with Mr. Hulke in the matter of charity not infrequently, as he acted as an Almoner to our Relief Fund, and we know him to have been deeply alive to the needs of his poorer brethren, and most earnestly anxious to relieve them.

His strict standard of duty for others he held up to himself, and devotion to duty was doubly answerable for his death. He took no holiday during the past year, his time being too occupied to permit him to do so, and the incessant and acute strain was telling upon him at Christmas. This much he admitted. On the night of Thursday, Feb. 7th, a terribly bitter night, he was summoned to the hospital to operate upon a case of strangulated hernia, from which he did not return until 3.30 A.M. On the following day he had a little bronchitis, but did not keep his bed. Indeed, he operated on Saturday at the Middlesex Hospital on a case of cerebral abscess, and went to the wards again on Sunday (Feb. 10th) and Monday (Feb. 11th). But later in the day he had to recognise that he was seriously ill, and the bronchitis

increasing, pneumonia supervened, and he died on Tuesday, Feb. 19th, about noon.

Mr. Hulke leaves behind him no children, but a widow, who, we regret to learn, is suffering from a serious attack of influenza, and two nephews, one of whom is a member of the profession.

A special meeting of the Clinical Society of London was held on Wednesday evening last to consider arrangements necessitated by the lamented death of the president of the society. The following resolution was passed, and a copy of it forwarded to Mrs. Hulke: "The Council of the Clinical Society of London has learnt with deep regret of the death of the President of the Society, John Whitaker Hulke, F.R.S., one of its original members, among its most earnest supporters, a highly gifted and very learned surgeon, who has filled the office of president with his wonted punctuality, urbanity, and zeal. The Council begs to offer its heartfelt and respectful sympathy to Mrs. Hulke in her great sorrow."

The interment will take place to-day (Saturday, 23rd) at Deal. A memorial service will be held at St. James's, Piccadilly, where the late Mr. Hulke was churchwarden, on the same day at one o'clock.

DEATHS OF EMINENT FOREIGN MEDICAL MEN.—The deaths of the following eminent foreign medical men are announced:—Dr. A. L. Loomis, Professor of Medical Pathology in the University of New York.—Dr. Sancho Martin, Professor of Midwifery in Valladolid.—Dr. Regnaud, Honorary Professor of Medical Chemistry in Paris.

## THE INDIAN MEDICAL CONGRESS.

### THE SECTIONS.

#### MEDICO-LEGAL MEDICINE.

DEC. 26TH, 1894.

THE HON. W. R. KYNSEY, C.M.G., F.R.C.P. Irel., delivered his presidential address. After a few introductory remarks he said: "The title of the Section sufficiently indicates its scope and object, and all here will agree with me that there is no branch of our profession more neglected than medical jurisprudence. Its history in Europe and the East, while full of great triumphs, is also full of cases where most serious consequences resulted from inexperience and ignorance, due to the fact that few make the scientific questions involved the subject of definite and intelligent study. To no science are the remarks of Ruskin more applicable: 'The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something and tell what he saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one that can think, but thousands can think for one who can see.' In the relations which exist between medicine and law the testimony of experts is necessary for the purpose of arriving at truth, which is the ultimate object of the medical and the legal professions, a trial being merely a means for obtaining it. The interest of good government, the sacredness of human life, and the welfare of man demand that no one should be accepted as a medical witness who has not made a special study of the many sciences upon which medical jurisprudence is founded. Medical evidence is important in all countries, but in the East it is often the only evidence at all to be relied upon, and on it alone often hangs the liberty or life of a human being."

[Mr. Kynsey then drew attention to the increase in all countries of communications dealing with criminology and continued:]

"The term 'criminal anthropology' was first given by Lombroso to that branch of morbid psychology which is concerned with the study of the physical and psychical peculiarities found in criminals, and it deals with all the problems connected with the criminal as he is in himself and as he becomes in contact with society. He maintains that by its means it is possible to determine the probability of a prisoner's reformation and the best methods by which this can be effected; but it cannot, of course, be used to discover the author of a crime, although by means of measurements prisoners can be easily identified accurately." He next quoted how criminals had been classified by Benedikt upon a pathological basis, and by Enrico Ferries upon a clinical basis.

"The Italian school, and those who think with them, consider criminality from a scientific point of view, and assert that it is a neurosis originating either in an inherited or an