

OBITUARY NOTICES

Professor R. Ramsay Wright, LL.D.

Ob. 5th September, 1933.

Dr. Ramsay Wright was born at Alloa in September, 1852, and was educated there and at the Royal High School and University of Edinburgh. Before he had fully qualified in medicine his attainments in biology, which he studied under Professor Sir Charles Wyville Thompson, led to an appointment to lecture on natural history in University College, Toronto. There he remained for thirty-eight years, becoming Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Vice-President of the University, having held the professorship of biology for many years, and receiving the title of Emeritus Professor when he retired in 1912. He wrote many valuable articles on zoology, including a report on Fish and Fisheries of Ontario. Beside these, his work at Toronto was remarkable for his capacity as a teacher, and for his having introduced into the medical curriculum the teaching of practical biology so early as 1875.

In addition to his attainments in science he was an unusually competent linguist with a wide knowledge of the classics, Hebrew, and half a dozen European languages, including Russian. He read widely in literature and had a cultured taste in art and music. The universities of Toronto and Edinburgh both honoured him with the degree of LL.D.

Though he became a member of this Society only in 1927 his interest in Oriental subjects was much earlier. Attracted to the study of Persian by Heron-Allen's works on Omar Khayyam he proceeded to learn Arabic also. He had intended on settling in Oxford, near his friend Sir William Osler, to continue biological research, but was diverted by the War, during which he did valuable service on the *Review of the Foreign Press*, for which his knowledge of European languages specially fitted him. In 1919 his translation of a Persian

primer on medicine (Bodleian No. 1617) appeared in a volume of contributions on physical and medical research presented to Sir William Osler by pupils and friends. He then settled down to edit and translate with notes a treatise on astrology by Abu'l Rayhān al-Bīrūnī. His only publication on this subject which occupied him so long was a note in German, identifying a Persian MS., referred to by Greaves in his *Astronomica quaedam* (1650), which appeared in the proceedings of the Physico-Medical Society of Erlangen (1926-7). But his edition of al-Bīrūnī's treatise is complete, and it is hoped it will appear shortly.

R. BURN.

Jessie Payne Margoliouth

On the 18th of August, 1933, the last direct link with the *Thesaurus Syriacus* was broken. No scholar could mention the name of the late Mrs. Margoliouth without a reference to her illustrious father and his monumental work, as it was she who, with the help of her husband, brought to a successful end the last part of the book from the middle of the letter *Shīn* to the end of *Tāu*. Trained in the domain of Syriac lexicography under the expert supervision of her father, she undertook also, in 1903, some eight years after his death, to publish an abridged English edition of the *Thesaurus*, under the title of *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*. In this work she followed a happy *via media* between her father's highly scientific work and the more popular *Lexicon Syriacum* of Brockelmann and *Dictionarium Syriaco-Latinum* of Brun, which had appeared almost simultaneously in 1895. These two works (especially the latter) give the Latin equivalents of Syriac words, often without any explanatory examples or phrases, while Mrs. Margoliouth supplies to her readers all the specifically Syriac expressions found in the more commonly read authors. One of the most difficult tasks of a lexicographer is this happy selection of the terms and expressions which he intends