

Obituaries

some inward experience of which he never spoke, that made him love the Lord his God with all his heart and all his strength, and his neighbour as himself. He was specially fond of children and they were very fond of him; and in the large congregation which assembled in his church for his funeral service a detachment of Boy Scouts and another of Girl Guides were probably among the truest mourners present.

He was laid to rest beside his mother in Rosebank Cemetery at Pilrig, and though the world is poorer for the loss of a Christian gentleman and a great physician, his influence will live in the large number of young lives that he influenced, and in the high ideals that he lived by himself and that he handed on, brightened by his use, to the generation that will follow him.

R. D. C.

DR ALFRED MAXWELL WILLIAMSON.

WE regret to record the death of Dr Alfred Maxwell Williamson, which took place at Edinburgh on 5th January. For over twenty years Dr Williamson has been attached to the Public Health Department of the City of Edinburgh, first as assistant to Sir Henry Littlejohn, and later as his successor in the post of Medical Officer of Health.

Dr Williamson came of a medical stock. His father, who for long held the post of Police Surgeon to the Burgh of Leith, was one of a coterie of accomplished practitioners of the old school, including Dr James Struthers, Dr John Henderson (Provost of the Burgh, and a pioneer in town improvement), Dr Robert Paterson (the biographer of Syme), and Dr Robert Hardie, who for many years maintained the highest traditions of the profession in the Port.

Before taking up the study of medicine, in 1884, Dr Williamson was engaged for some years at engineering. He graduated M.B., C.M. at Edinburgh, in 1888, and after spending a short time in general practice he decided to turn his attention to Public Health. In 1890 he obtained the degree of B.Sc. (Public Health), and in 1899 that of M.D.

What might be termed his apprenticeship as Medical Officer of Health was spent in the capacity of Sanitary Inspector for the City—a post which had not previously been assigned to a medical man. On the retirement of Sir Henry Littlejohn Dr Williamson was elected to fill his post.

During his tenure of office the administration of the Public Health

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affairs of the City underwent various developments, and in these Dr Williamson was called to take his part. Under his ægis separate departments were established to deal with Tuberculosis and with Venereal Diseases, and a Child Welfare Scheme was initiated. In the matter of slum clearances, and the provision of better housing in the poorer and more crowded parts of the city, he took a keen personal interest, and his writings on these questions were not without influence on the authorities in Edinburgh and elsewhere. He acted as Examiner in Medical Jurisprudence and Public Health for the Triple Qualification of the Scottish Colleges, and as Examiner in Public Health for the University of Edinburgh.

Except in his official capacity, Dr Williamson took little part in the medical life of the city. His interests were elsewhere. A man of determination and of exceptionally strong will, he was apt, in his dealings with his colleagues, to prove somewhat inflexible, even obdurate. In discussion, he often failed, or refused, to see the other side of an argument; in action, he was inclined to carry matters with a high hand. His convictions, however, were honestly held, and his bark usually proved to be worse than his bite.

Those who knew him best recognised behind his somewhat imperious manner a strong strain of emotionalism, which found expression, particularly in his later years, in his devotion to evangelical work. In this, as in other matters, he knew no half measures, and he spared neither his time nor his substance in promoting various religious and philanthropic movements in the city. His work on behalf of the children and youths of the Cowgate and Grassmarket was as sincere as it was unostentatious, and many of those whom he had befriended were present at South Leith churchyard when he was laid at rest.

M.