

THOMAS HINCKS, F.R.S.

IT is little more than a month since an obituary notice of George James Allman appeared in these pages, and death has now claimed another distinguished worker in the same field. The Rev. Thomas Hincks, who died at Clifton on January 25, was but six years younger than Allman, having been born at Exeter on July 15, 1818. Allman's best-known works are his monographs on *Gymnoblasic Hydroids* and *Fresh-water Polyzoa*. Hincks' monographs on the same subjects, "*A History of the British Hydroid Zoophytes*" (1868) and "*A History of the British Marine Polyzoa*" (1880) are, by an unusual coincidence, more widely known and appreciated than any of his other works. The former was published while the sheets of the "*Gymnoblasic Hydroids*" were passing through the press, and Allman's opinion of it, recorded in his preface, may fitly be quoted here:—"Eminently critical, with the descriptions accurate and lucid, and with the figures abundant and expressive, it is the most complete systematic work on the *Hydroida* hitherto published. The large amount of original observations gives it a special value, and its fulness of description and illustration renders it indispensable to every student of the *Hydroida*."

The praise bestowed on the "*Hydroid Zoophytes*" must be accorded in the fullest measure to the "*Marine Polyzoa*." This work constitutes a new departure, containing as it does an account so accurate and critical of the British *Polyzoa* as to have influenced all later work on this group of animals, and to have made it the best general monograph on the marine *Polyzoa* which exists in any language.

Hincks' monographs are the ripe results of independent and accurate observation, ranging over the whole area of the subject treated. He was accustomed to take a broad and comprehensive view of his subject-matter; and the classification of the marine *Polyzoa* in particular owes not a little to his insight. The selection of characters by which to discriminate genera and families was a subject to which he gave special attention; and he was a successful advocate of the view that the surest test of affinities in the *Polyzoa* is the character of the individual or zoecium rather than that of the entire colony. The encrusting *Cheilostomes* formerly known as *Lepralia*, and the erect bilaminar species formerly referred to the genus *Eschara*, were thus distributed among widely separated genera, whose characters probably rest on a firmer foundation than those recognised by the older naturalists. Questions connected with the natural history of zoophytes always excited Hincks' particular interest; and many curious phenomena shown by the living forms have become familiar as the result of his observations.

Most of Hincks' papers appeared in the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, between the years 1851 and 1893. *Hydrozoa* at first came in for the larger share of his attention, but latterly the *Polyzoa* claimed almost the whole of it. The series of papers entitled "*Contributions towards a General History of the Marine Polyzoa*" were republished in a collected form in 1894; and one of Mr. Hincks' last pieces of work was the preparation of an index to this series, containing many important additions, which appeared in 1895. This volume is a most valuable record of systematic work, carried out in an admirable manner. The publication of papers on systematic zoology may be of very doubtful benefit in unskilful hands; but of Mr. Hincks' work it can only be said that he enlightened all that he touched. Difficult questions were treated as by the hand of a master, and his wide knowledge and logical faculty led him to conclusions which in most cases command assent.

Thomas Hincks was the son of the late Rev. William Hincks, formerly professor of natural history at Toronto, grandson of the late Dr. Thomas Dix Hincks, pro-

fessor of Hebrew at Belfast, and nephew of the late Sir Francis Hincks, a distinguished Canadian statesman, at one time governor of Barbadoes, and of the late Dr. E. Hincks, the well-known Egyptologist. He was educated at Manchester New College, York, taking the degree of B.A. at London in 1840, and became minister of the Mill Hill Chapel at Leeds in 1855, resigning in 1869 in consequence of the failure of his voice. He afterwards lived at Taunton, and subsequently for many years at Clifton, where he died.

Mr. Hincks' name appears in the list of those who attended the seventh meeting of the British Association at Liverpool in 1837. He took an active part, at the earliest stage, in the preparations for the recent meeting of the Association at Bristol; but failing health unfortunately prevented him from taking any share in its proceedings last September. He was of active habits, devoted to open-air labour in his garden until comparatively near the close of his life, and it was probably owing to this that he was able to continue his scientific work until a year or two ago. He was a man of singular refinement and dignity, a correct and convincing speaker, and was distinguished for the zeal with which he threw himself into all charitable and philanthropic work at Leeds, in spite of the heavy and exhausting scientific work which he undertook at a time occupied by absorbing pastoral claims. He was a conspicuous example of the type of naturalist, common in this country, who earn for themselves distinction during the leisure spared from the performance of other duties. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1872, shortly after leaving Leeds. He married in early life Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. John Allen, of Warrington, who, with two daughters, survives her husband.

Mr. Hincks was the friend of Allman, Busk, and Principal Dawson, as well as of Canon Norman, Prof. McIntosh and Prof. F. A. Smitt, of Stockholm, whose important works on the *Polyzoa*, published in Swedish, he did so much to make known to English naturalists.

The writer of these lines is indebted to Mr. W. A. Shenstone for most of the personal details, but he is able to add his own grateful testimony to the kindness and courtesy shown by Mr. Hincks in his correspondence with those who applied to him for information.

The study of zoophytology is the poorer by the loss of one whose work will endure.

S. F. H.

NOTES.

SIR WILLIAM MACCORMAC, President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, delivered the Hunterian Oration on Tuesday afternoon in the theatre of the college in the presence of the Prince of Wales and a large and distinguished company. He rapidly reviewed the events of Hunter's life, enumerated his chief contributions to biological and surgical science, described his methods in research and in instruction, and paid a warm tribute to the astonishing range of his investigations, the magnitude of his actual achievement, and the far-reaching influence he had exercised on the subsequent development of surgery. In the course of his address, the *Times* reports him to have remarked: "In the first instance Hunter's work was biological, his range including both the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and the mineral kingdom as well, and to illustrate his investigations he became a collector. But he was chiefly and finally a surgeon, and to the development of surgery he brought all the knowledge and all the training which he had acquired in other branches of science. He carries us beyond mere handicraft and detail into the region of general principles and law. The surgery of the Middle Ages was a trade, Ambroise Paré and Jean Louis Petit converted it into an art, John Hunter elevated it to the rank of a science. Hunter's life and work in-