

be made accessible in large volumes in Great Britain. He also took a great interest in the production of motor spirit from coal by the hydrogenation process. The coping stone of his scientific career was placed only last year by his election to the fellowship of the Royal Society.

As one of his oldest colleagues, the writer wishes to stress Cadman's perpetual insistence that no industry can flourish that is not soundly based on truly scientific foundations. In the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company he fostered research. He was responsible for the creation of the largest petroleum research station in the Empire and one that will bear every comparison with corresponding organizations abroad. He was deeply sensible of the need of the latest and best scientific advice. He supplemented the efforts of his own staff with those of highly skilled and eminent advisers. He continually visited the laboratories and took the keenest interest in the welfare and well-being of his staff. In return he was rewarded by a constant stream of invention, discovery and development.

A. E. DUNSTAN.

Dr. R. Campbell Thompson, F.B.A.

REGINALD CAMPBELL THOMPSON died of heart failure after coming off duty with the Home Guard on the night of May 23. He was the last representative in England of a phase of Assyriology which converted that study from a discovery into a science. When he was a boy at St. Paul's, he was attracted by the results attained by the early Assyriologists during the heroic days which had opened with the measured judgment on translations submitted by four different scholars in 1842, by a committee which did not profess to understand the text translated. By the time he reached Caius College, Cambridge, the *epigoni* had been busy for some fifteen years producing grammars, dictionaries, catalogues of tablets; the exciting work of decipherment and interpretation on the lines of Sir Henry Rawlinson, George Smith, Oppert and Sayce was becoming a science and was a subject favoured by German, but not by English, or even French, universities. When he entered the British Museum in 1899, already well equipped for Assyriological studies, the ground had been prepared for the classification of Babylonian and Assyrian texts, for methodical publication of texts by classes and for the codification of results.

For forty years Thompson contributed, sometimes with the brilliant success of the pioneers he most admired, but also by steady and laborious work, to the new conditions of his chosen subject. Between 1900 and 1908 there appeared in the official publication of the British Museum copies from his pen of Babylonian syllabaries, magical incantations against evil spirits, Babylonian letters of the late period, each class of document arranged after examination of great numbers of tablets and fragments, all the copies in beautiful script, the standard of accuracy remarkable. In addition to this great output, he edited, in private publications, texts dealing with astrology, magic and social life. In each of these

branches, more particularly in astrology, his work was of outstanding importance, for he was able to discard much worthless nonsense that had been written on the subject and produce an interpretation of the astronomical phenomena involved, on which subsequent studies have been firmly based. He then turned to the study of comparative religion; his volume on "Semitic Magic", though affected by prejudices and questionable preconceptions, contains information not to be found elsewhere, which ought not to be neglected by younger scholars as it has been.

After the break caused by travel when he left the British Museum, and by service in Intelligence during the War of 1914-18, Campbell Thompson's principal scientific work was concentrated on the publication and interpretation of those Assyrian texts which contained prescriptions for the sick, in the form of omens, or recipes for making glazes or glass. After publishing the original texts of most of the documents himself, he undertook the strenuous labour of classifying and interpreting the names of plants and stones, using for this purpose the scattered references in the wide range of cuneiform literature, and applying comparative material that required minute study. In two books, the "Assyrian Herbal" and the "Dictionary of Assyrian Chemistry and Geology", he provided two model works for the history of science, which have indeed been heavily drawn upon by general writers on that subject. The collection of material is beyond praise, the interpretations suggested always reasonable, most often correct, sometimes brilliant in their insight. These two works constitute Thompson's great contribution to humane learning, and it is the more to be regretted that owing to circumstances he was not able to see a printed edition of his "Assyrian Herbal" to press; the fitting tribute to him would be that such an edition should yet appear.

He was a man of many-sided interests, of boundless energy and enthusiasm. His chapters in the "Cambridge Ancient History", vols. I-III, give the liveliest, most human picture of the ancient Babylonian civilization yet written. His translation of the Gilgamesh Epic, following an excellent edition of the text which involved a new examination of the British Museum collections, betrays the same zest in the human quality of the story. As a traveller, he loved the manners and methods of the past, and aimed at describing his experience in the words of the past, as in "Pilgrim's Scrip" (1915). Excavations at Carchemish, at Wadi Sarga in Egypt, at Nineveh, were an adventure, conducted in that spirit to shock the over-serious or dull-witted. An undeciphered script, the Hittite hieroglyphs, he attacked with an optimism justified in that he was able to produce results still accepted in part. Prize poems and anonymous novels were part of his activities, and so were yachting and games.

Thompson was a fellow of Merton, Shillito reader in the University of Oxford, and fellow of the British Academy. No one who met him could fail to recognize his sterling qualities, honesty, energy, disinterested devotion to his subject.

SIDNEY SMITH.