

OBITUARIES

Prof. Susan Stebbing

DR. L. SUSAN STEBBING, since 1933 professor of philosophy in the University of London (Bedford College), died on September 11 at the age of fifty-seven at Tintagel in Cornwall. Educated at Girton College, Cambridge, she read for both parts of the Historical Tripos and for Part I of the Moral Sciences Tripos. In 1912 she graduated M.A. in philosophy, with mark of distinction, at London. After acting as director of moral science studies at Girton and Newnham, Dr. Stebbing was appointed successively lecturer, reader and professor in philosophy in the University of London.

It was unquestionably to the work of contemporary philosophers at Cambridge that the very marked bent of Prof. Stebbing's philosophical interests and orientation are to be traced. Accepting in the main the 'charter' of the scope and method for all future philosophy set out by Bertrand Russell in his Lowell Lectures, she adopted his recommendation of a piecemeal and co-operative treatment of problems by an 'analytical' method, though in the actual pursuit of this aim and in determining what this analytical method should be, she was less influenced by Russell. Here, as she herself declared, her indebtedness to Prof. G. E. Moore was the profoundest and most continuous through her life, though she also often expressed how much she owed to such other Cambridge philosophers as A. N. Whitehead, C. D. Broad, W. E. Johnson and L. Wittgenstein. Her energies were for the greater part afterwards devoted to the three fields of mathematical logic, the methodology and philosophy of the sciences, and the analysis of problems concerning perceptual knowledge of the external world.

A close and prolonged study of Russell and Whitehead's "Principia Mathematica" and of the works of most other formal logicians present and past eventually entitled her to the rank of an authority in that science. How clear and sure was her grasp of its detail is evident from the article "Logistic" contributed to the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (14th edit.) and in her "Modern Introduction to Logic" (1931)—now in its third edition—in which she skillfully combined the essentials of the newer with those of the traditional logic, and corrected and modernized the theory of scientific method inherited from Mill.

It is in this field that her best work is found, though to readers of NATURE Prof. Stebbing is probably better known as the author of "Philosophy and the Physicists" (1937), where, with much caustic comment, she rigorously examined the attempts of Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington to elucidate the philosophical implications of recent developments in mathematical physics. Jeans's argument for the existence of a Great Architect whose activity is that of a pure mathematician and whose thoughts constitute the universe, she rejected as metaphysical extravagance. She complained that these writers, instead of enlightening the common reader, confuse him by approaching their task through "an emotional fog" and by excessive use of personification and metaphor. In the interpretation Eddington placed on his assertion that "the aim of science is to construct a world that shall be symbolic of the world of common experience", she protested at his restricting physical knowledge to the ascertainment of

'pointer-readings' and their connexions, and to his affirming an unknown background correlated with them, the existence of which, she maintained, on his own premises, he ought never to know or even suspect. She likewise objected to his regarding the laws of conservation, gravitation and Maxwell's equations as truisms and not 'controlling laws'; to his assertion that the familiar objects of perception are mere products of "mind-spinning"; to the blurred and indefinite reference in his use of such phrases as "the familiar world", "the external world", "the physical world", "the scientific world", "Nature", "the spiritual world", etc., and the failure to show how one was conceived to be related to another. She condemned, too, Eddington's frequent and large use of the metaphor of 'building' and constructing, and complained that he "nowhere expounded his philosophical ideas in non-popular language", though the communication of exact thought is impossible in inexact language.

Despite the asperity of her stricture, Prof. Stebbing's thinking throughout her writing and teaching generally was strenuous and clear-headed. She spared not herself and strove for consistency, and her judgment, if not highly original, was certainly highly independent. Her students, with whom she was very popular, and her colleagues will deeply deplore their loss.

S. V. KEELING.

Sir Francis Fremantle, O.B.E., M.P.

By the death on August 26 of Sir Francis Fremantle, Great Britain loses the services of a man who devoted the greater part of his life to the promotion of the national health. He was born in 1872, a great-great-grandson of one of Nelson's captains, and fourth son of the Hon. William Fremantle, Dean of Ripon. He chose medicine for his future profession while still a King's Scholar at Eton.

After taking honours in physiology at Oxford, Fremantle did the usual clinical appointments at Guy's, and was one of the very few men to hold both the D.M. and M.Ch. degrees, later also becoming a fellow of both of the Royal Colleges. He served as a civil surgeon in the South African War, and in 1902 acted as assistant secretary to the War Office Commission for the Reorganisation of the Army Medical Service. He then spent several years preparing for the career he had mapped out for himself already in his Balliol days—that of a medical member of Parliament. With this object in view he took the appointment of medical officer of health for Hertfordshire in 1902. He obtained leave of absence to act as plague medical officer in the Punjab in 1903 and special correspondent of the *Lancet* in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, and to tour the Empire in 1911. He described his varied experiences in "A Doctor in Khaki" (1901) and "Health and Empire" (1911). He served in Gallipoli, Egypt and Mesopotamia in the War of 1914-18 as D.A.D.M.S.

From 1919 until his death Fremantle was Conservative M.P. for St. Albans. He soon became recognized as the leading spokesman of the medical profession in the House of Commons, and was accepted as an authority in all matters relating to the public health. From 1923 he was chairman of the all-parties Parliamentary Medical Committee. He was a member of the Industrial Health Research Board, the Departmental Commission on the Midwives Act, the Central

Housing Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health and the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing.

Fremantle always tried to put before the House of Commons the strictly medical and scientific aspects of the subject under discussion. He was most conscientious, and was very regular in his attendance. Though not brilliant, he was extremely painstaking, and his opinions always received the attention they deserved. During the recent debate on the decline of the population he spoke with great earnestness on the causes and probable effects of the declining birth-rate on the future of the nation. His books brought his views on health problems before a wider public. In addition to those already mentioned, they included works on "The Housing of the Nation", in which he pointed out the shortcomings of housing as they appeared to a medical officer of health in 1927, and on "The Health of the Nation" (1928).

Fremantle was much liked by members of all parties in the House and was equally popular with all classes in his constituency, where he was D.L. and J.P. He lived at Bedwell Park, near Hatfield, and was knighted in 1932. He married Dorothy, daughter of the late Mr. H. J. Chinnery, of Bicester, in 1905 and had one son, Lieut.-Colonel David Fremantle.

ARTHUR HURST.

Prof. T. J. Jehu

PROF. THOMAS JOHN JEHU, who was born at Llanfair-Caireinion, Montgomeryshire, in 1871 and who died at Edinburgh on July 18, will be long remembered for the striking and comprehensive series of investigations he planned and carried out, in conjunction with other members of the staff of the Geological Department of the University of Edinburgh, on the metamorphic and igneous rocks of the Highland Border Series at Aberfoyle and on the Archaean complexes of the Outer Hebrides. His active life falls into three periods: (1) the period of preparation and of post-graduate research; (2) the period of his tenure of the lectureship in geology at St. Andrews; and (3) the period—from 1914 onwards—during which he occupied the regius chair of geology and mineralogy at Edinburgh.

Jehu received his early education at Oswestry High School and thereafter matriculated at the University of Edinburgh, passing through the Faculties of Medicine and Science and graduating M.B., C.M. in 1893 and B.Sc. in 1894. He was early attracted to the study of natural history and, under the inspiring guidance of Prof. James Geikie, laid the foundations of a life-long interest in geological research. He continued his studies at Cambridge, where he had a distinguished career, gaining a first class in both parts of the Natural Sciences Tripos in 1897, and a second class in the Moral Sciences Tripos in 1898, besides winning the Newcombe Prize in Natural Science at St. John's College (1898). During the tenure of a Heriot Fellowship at Edinburgh he completed a valuable bathymetrical and geological study of the lakes and rock-basins of Snowdonia and eastern Carnarvonshire, published in 1902. In 1900 he was elected to the fellowship of the Geological Society of London and in 1902 received the degree of M.D. from the University of Edinburgh.

In 1903 Jehu was appointed to the lectureship in geology at St. Andrews, where the organization of

this newly established department and his lecturing and tutorial duties both at St. Andrews and at Dundee demanded most of his energy and time. He found opportunity, however, to prepare and publish two important papers dealing with the glacial deposits of northern Pembrokeshire (1904) and of western Carnarvonshire (1909), in which he discussed in detail the succession of events in the glacial history of these areas and emphasized the evidence provided by the deposits for an extension of the Irish Sea ice. In 1906 he was appointed a member of the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion and took a prominent share in drafting the reports and findings of the Commission issued between 1907 and 1911.

In 1914 Jehu succeeded his old teacher James Geikie as regius professor at Edinburgh, a position which he held until his retirement, on account of increasing ill-health, in June last. To this period belong the outstanding series of contributions to Scottish geology referred to at the beginning of this notice. Following on his discovery of fossils of Cambro-Ordovician age in the Highland Border rocks of the Aberfoyle district, first announced in NATURE of June 6, 1912, he undertook, in conjunction with Dr. R. Campbell, a detailed investigation into the geological succession and structure of this complicated region, the results of which appeared in 1917. This was followed in 1922 by his paper on the Archaean and Torridonian Formations and Later Igneous Rocks of Iona, and in later years by the extended series of researches which he carried out in collaboration with Dr. R. M. Craig on the geology of the Outer Hebrides. The "Geology of the Barra Islands" was the first of this series, appearing in 1923, and was followed by "South Uist and Eriskay" in 1925, "North Uist and Benbecula" in 1926, "South Harris" in 1927, and "North Harris and Lewis" in 1934. This sequence of papers, in which the old gneisses, the later intrusive rocks and the glacial phenomena of the long chain of islands forming the Outer Hebrides were first described in detail, represents a striking contribution to Scottish geology, and its importance was recognized by the award to the authors by the Royal Society of Edinburgh of the Neill Medal and Prize for the period 1925-27. Among the outstanding results of this extended research was the mapping in detail of a belt of highly crushed and mylonitized rock ('flinty crush') along the whole eastern boundary of the islands from Barra to Lewis, a feature which Dr. J. W. Dougal had already noted in 1911.

Jehu's tenure of the Edinburgh chair was also notable for the transference of the Geological Department from restricted and unsuitable premises in the Old College, first to temporary accommodation on the outskirts of the city in 1923, and then in 1931 to the specially designed and well-equipped Grant Institute of Geology.

Most of Prof. Jehu's research work appeared as papers in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, but he also contributed to other scientific publications such as the *Geological Magazine*, the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, the *Transactions of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland*, etc. Before illness laid him aside, he took a prominent part in the various academic and scientific activities of Edinburgh; he represented the University, for example, on a number of public bodies, served as vice-president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh from 1929 until 1932, and was president of the Edinburgh Geological Society during 1917-18.

M. MACGREGOR.