

## OBITUARY.

During the last few years the Society has lost through death no fewer than six of its most active and distinguished members, Professor C. H. Oldham who died in 1926, Sir William Thompson and Dr. Ninian Falkiner who died in 1929, and Messrs. Thomas Barrington, John Hooper, and Sparkhall Brown whose deaths occurred in tragic succession within an interval of little more than a year (1930-1931). All these gentlemen had occupied high office in the Society, contributed notably to its proceedings, and had worked indefatigably to further its objects. The following memoirs record briefly some of the principal facts of their careers and of their connection with the Society.

PROFESSOR C. H. OLDHAM.

(Died 20th February, 1926.)

Charles Hubert Oldham was born in 1860 in Westmoreland Street, Dublin. He was the youngest son of Mr. Eldred Oldham, silk merchant. He was educated at Kingstown Grammar School and at Trinity College, Dublin, in which he became a scholar in 1879 and in 1882 he graduated as Senior Moderator, with the Large Gold Medal in Experimental Physics and a Gold Medal in Mathematics. Some time later he was called to the Bar and soon had a good practice in the Northern Circuit.

While in Trinity College he founded the Protestant Home Rule Association and a little later the Contemporary Club. He succeeded The Rt. Hon. W. F. Bailey as lecturer under the Barrington Trust, in which capacity he addressed meetings all over the country. His success was so notable that on the establishment of the Rathmines School of Commerce he was appointed its Principal. He was appointed first Professor of Commerce at the foundation of University College in 1909, which chair he vacated in 1917 to become Professor of National Economics in succession to the late T. M. Kettle.

The following is an extract from the tribute paid to his memory by his University:

“Professor Oldham worked with the same ardour (as Professor Kettle), unsparing in his efforts to afford his pupils the widest grasp of the subject and of the methods essential for its investigation. His personal worth, his great success as an investigator and teacher and his never failing interest in all that concerned the College and its members won the abiding regard of his colleagues and pupils.”

Professor Oldham joined the Society in November, 1887, and became Honorary Secretary in July, 1896. He was elected President in 1924 and was re-elected for a second term of office in the following year. During his Presidency he was instrumental in securing a large increase in the membership of the Society. In his thirty-nine years of membership he contributed no less than twenty papers to its proceedings. The recital of the following list of titles and dates

of these papers gives some indication of the life-long study he had made of every aspect of Irish economics, though it cannot convey his splendid grasp of his subject and his remarkable talent for exposition:—

- The Fluctuating Character of Modern Employment. (1896)
- Economic Development in Ireland. (1900)
- The Bearing of Industry on the Impending Changes in Irish Industry. (1900)
- Technical Education for Commerce. (1902)
- Kartels and Syndicates in German Industry. (1903)
- The Economics of "Industrial Revival" in Ireland. (1908)
- The Education of American Business Men. (1909)
- The History of Belfast Shipbuilding. (1910)
- The Incidence of Emigration on Town and Country Life in Ireland. (1914)
- The Economic Interests involved in the Present War. (1915)
- British Finance of the War. (1916)
- Industrial Ireland under Free Trade. (1917)
- Changes in Irish Exports During Twelve Years. (1918).
- Changes in the Export Industries of Ireland, 1904-1916. (1919)
- The Public Finances of Ireland. (1920)
- The Development of Tillage in Ireland during the World War. (1923)
- Some Perplexities in regard to the Agricultural Statistics of Ireland. (1924)
- The Interpretation of Irish Statistics. (1924)
- The Trade Statistics of the Irish Free State in 1924. (1925)
- Reform of the Irish Census of Population. (1925).
- The following are the titles of works of Professor Oldham published elsewhere:
- Economic Development in Ireland. (1900)
- Memorandum on the Reasons for including Irish in the Curriculum of the Rathmines School of Commerce. (1905)
- The Woollen Industry of Ireland. (1909)
- The Economic and Industrial Condition of Ireland. (1910)
- Ireland's External Trade before and since the Free Trade Period. (1910)
- Amongst his other activities Oldham was one of the founders and editors of the *Dublin University Magazine*, and was a regular contributor to the *Economist*. He was examiner to the Institute of Bankers, in the Journal of which he made many notable contributions.

SIR WILLIAM J. THOMPSON.  
(Died 10th June, 1929.)

William John Thompson was born at Cavanaleek, Co. Tyrone, in 1861. His entire life since he was a student was spent in Dublin. He followed with distinction a course of studies at the Royal College of Surgeons and at Trinity College, graduating B.A. in 1892, M.B. in 1894, and M.D. in 1895. He obtained the diplomas of L.R.C.P.I. in 1888, M.R.C.P. in 1898, and F.R.C.P. in 1902. Soon after qualification he was elected demonstrator in anatomy to the College of Surgeons and was appointed house-physician at St. Vincent's Hospital. He later became visiting physician and finally senior

physician to Jervis Street Hospital. He had an extensive private practice, devoting much of his professional skill and energies to combating tuberculosis and infantile diseases.

During Lord Aberdeen's Vice-Royalty Dr. Thompson was Physician-in-Ordinary to the Lord Lieutenant, and was knighted for his distinguished services to medicine in 1907. He was appointed chief medical adviser to the Women's National Health Association, founded by Lady Aberdeen in the same year, and became Consulting Physician to Peamount Sanatorium, founded in 1911 by this Association. In 1909 he was appointed Registrar-General in succession to Sir Robert Matheson, an appointment which he held until his retirement in 1926. He was Chairman of the 1911 Census Commission.

In 1924 Sir William was elected President of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, having been a Vice-President for two years. He was a member of the Board of Governors of Sir Patrick Dun's, the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear, Jervis Street and Coombe Hospitals. He was also a member of the Council of the Royal Dublin Society, a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, and at one time President of the Section of State Medicine of this Academy. During the war, he was Secretary to the Red Cross Hospital in Dublin Castle.

Sir William Thompson was elected a member of this Society in December, 1909, and from the outset took a very active interest in its proceedings. He was elected President in 1918, and was re-elected in the following year. He contributed the following papers to the Society:—

The Development of the Irish Census and its National Importance (1911).

The Census of Ireland, 1911. (1913).

Fifty Years of Vital Statistics in Ireland. (1918).

The First Census of the Irish Free State and its Importance to the Country. (1926).

He was also the author of many papers on medical topics and contributed a paper on "Infantile Mortality and Infant Milk Depots" to the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science* in 1906.

DR. NINIAN M. FALKINER.

(Died October 30th, 1929.)

Ninian M. Falkiner was born in Dublin on 21st June, 1857. He was educated in Dublin University from which he graduated B.A. in 1878 with a silver medal in Experimental Science. After obtaining this primary degree he took up the study of medicine in which he had a distinguished college career, obtaining first place in the M.B. examination in 1884. In 1889 he was awarded the Diploma of State Medicine also with first place in the examination. He became F.R.C.P.I. in 1891, and M.D. in 1900. In 1891 he was appointed Medical Officer of Health for South Dublin. In 1900 he relinquished this position to become Medical Superintendent of Statistics in the General Register Office under the late Sir Robert Matheson. During the European War he acted as Assistant Registrar of the Lord Derby War Hospital.

Dr. Falkiner was elected a member of this Society on 27th November, 1900, and became Honorary Secretary a year later, a position which he held until his death. He contributed two papers to the Society's proceedings, one in 1920 on "The Nurse and the State" and the other in 1924 on "The Evolution of the Diploma of Public Health." Works by Dr. Falkiner published elsewhere were on "The Notification of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and Primary Syphilis" and on "The Registration of Diseases," as well as a number of papers on scientific topics.

Dr. Falkiner was Vice-President of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland and a member of the Royal Zoological Society. He was deeply interested in the work of the Stillorgan Convalescent Home, the Royal Hospital for Incurables and the Berwick Home.

THOMAS BARRINGTON.  
(Died 8th March, 1930.)

Thomas Barrington was born on 17th December, 1881, at Clouna, Ennistymon, Co. Clare. Obtaining a high place in the Second Division examination, he joined the Civil Service in 1901. After a couple of years in various other offices he was transferred to the Department of Agriculture in 1903 and in the twenty years which he spent there he attained to a great knowledge of every aspect of Irish agriculture, the instinct for which as a farmer's son he already had bred in his bones. His great interest in agriculture stimulated him to pursue his economic studies further afield and the fruit of these years of study is to be found in his published work and his unpublished official memoranda. During his earlier years in the Service preferment came slowly for a man of his ability and it was only in 1920 that he reached the grade of Higher Executive Officer. With the change in government, however, promotion was rapid and in 1923 he became Superintending Officer in the Department of Industry and Commerce and in 1927 Principal Officer in the same Department. In the latter years he was rapidly achieving a great reputation in the Saorstát Civil Service and an international reputation at the numerous conferences which he attended at Paris and Geneva, as one of the representatives of his country. Although he was in bad health at the time he felt it his duty to attend one of these Conferences at Geneva but while there he contracted rheumatic fever followed by double pneumonia and died on 8th March, 1930.

Barrington joined the Society in October, 1924, and was elected a Member of the Council in October, 1925. He contributed two papers to its proceedings, "A Review of Irish Agricultural Prices" (1926) and "The Clash between the Individualistic and Social Concept of Value" (1927). The former of these, in which he showed the inevitability of the changes which have taken place in Irish Agriculture in the past century, was by common consent one of the best papers ever read before this Society. It also achieved what is necessarily rare from the nature of the contributions to the Society's proceedings—a popular circulation. It is a paper which has influenced and must continue to influence the current of economic thought in the Saorstát. The second of his papers is also profoundly interesting and original. It will probably be the starting point for further researches into this most elusive problem in economics.

## JOHN HOOPER.

(Died 29th December, 1930.)

John Hooper was born in Cork City on January 26th, 1878, the third son of Alderman John Hooper, Member of Parliament for Cork County. In 1891 the family moved to Dublin. He was educated at O'Connell Schools, North Richmond Street, and he graduated B.A. in the Royal University in 1898 with First Class Honours in mathematics. After obtaining his degree he proceeded to London to study for the First Division of the Civil Service into which class he passed in 1900. His first appointment was in the Office of the Postmaster-General, London, but in 1902 he availed himself of an opportunity of transferring to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Dublin, where he was appointed to the Statistics and Intelligence Branch under the late Dr. W. P. Coyne, from whom he received the training which, coupled with his great natural ability, paved the way for future promotion. He was appointed Superintendent of his Branch in 1917, and upon the change of government in 1922 he was appointed first Director of Statistics and entrusted with the arduous task of initiating the statistical service of the Saorstát

He developed considerably the statistics which he inherited from former Government Departments and in addition inaugurated the system of trade statistics and the quarterly enquiries into the cost of living. In 1926 the Census of Population was assigned to him and in the same year he undertook the first Census of Industrial Production. Only a specialist can appreciate the magnitude of these tasks or the virtuosity which Hooper showed in accomplishing them. His field of activities included the Census of Population, the Censuses of Industrial and Agricultural Production, statistics relating to trade, transport, labour, prices, cost of living, migration and certain financial statistics. In 1926 he prepared the comprehensive Statistics Bill which subsequently was adopted by the Oireachtas. Hooper's policy was to give his statistics the widest publicity, and he greatly increased the popularity of his reports by the publication of a series of statistical analyses of the matter contained therein. In these analyses his gifts as a statistician are much in evidence. The late Professor Oldham said of his First Report on the Trade Statistics of the Irish Free State: "In my opinion this essay of twenty printed pages is the best example I have known of the scientific interpretation of statistics." A distinguished English statistician wrote of him: "He had the rare gift of making his statistics live."

Just before he died, the signal honour was conferred on him of election as a member of the International Institute of Statistics.

Mr. Hooper joined this Society in 1924 and in 1925 was elected a Vice-President. He was elected President for the session 1929-30. In 1929 he read an important paper on "Examination Statistics" before the Society in which he showed important correlations between the capacity of examination candidates in different branches of study and in which he suggested a fundamental change in the existing system of allocating marks. This paper attracted very wide notice amongst educationists and was published as an appendix to the official Report of the Department of Education for the year 1927-28.

SPARKHALL BROWN.

*(Died 3rd January, 1931.)*

Sparkhall Brown was born on 16th December, 1864, in Norfolk. He obtained a high place in the Second Division Examination for the Civil Service in 1884 but was rejected at the medical examination, having just recovered from a serious illness. He graduated B.A. in London University in 1886 and was appointed master at Middlesbrough High School in the same year. In 1890 he proceeded to Dublin to become a lecturer in Dr. Chetwode Crawley's Academy.

In 1902 Brown founded Rosse College, St. Stephen's Green, and in the twenty-eight years during which he was principal he built up a great reputation as a practical teacher. He held original and stimulating views on the subject of education based on his extensive experience, and which he promulgated in a number of lectures and papers. As a teacher he had been particularly successful with the backward type of boy and in an address which he delivered shortly before his death, and which attracted a good deal of notice, he advanced the theory that insufficient attention was given in schools to the boy of average or underaverage ability, and that the elaborate programme followed in secondary schools was suitable only for boys of exceptional intelligence.

Sparkhall Brown became a member of the Society in February, 1916, and was elected Honorary Secretary in 1918, an office to which he was re-elected for each subsequent session. During his tenure of office the Society owed much to his devoted energy and ability. It also benefited greatly from the typing and other secretarial service which he accorded the Society, and which Mrs. Brown and Mr. A. H. Sparkhall Brown have since very generously continued in his memory.

He contributed two papers to the Society, both on educational subjects: "The Limitations of School" (1918) and "The Need for Instruction on the Duty of the Individual to the Community" (1927). He often participated in the discussions at the general meetings, more particularly when economic or educational topics were under review. His observations were always practical and interesting. One might say that his outstanding quality as a lecturer and speaker was "enlightened commonsense."