

**Obituary.****JOHN AUGUSTUS WALLIS.**

We regret to have to record the death of Dr. John Augustus Wallis, one of the English Commissioners in Lunacy, which took place on the 30th December last. He had not been in robust health for some time. During the last year or two he had experienced several rather alarming attacks of heart failure, and had often expressed to his friends the opinion that he should not live long. Some months before his death he had consulted an eminent London physician, whose opinion had somewhat reassured him as to the state of his heart, and for a time he was much better. A few weeks before his death, however, he had a return of the symptoms, and on one or two occasions had attacks of an anginous character. At the time of his death he was staying at the house of his mother-in-law in Hull, and on the morning of December 30th, not feeling so well, he remained in bed, and was visited by a medical friend, who prescribed for him, but did not regard his condition as immediately dangerous, and there was nothing to suggest the somewhat sudden and unexpected termination. He was getting out of bed about noon, when he dropped down and expired from heart failure.

The deceased gentleman was a native of Cornwall, and received his early education at Falmouth. Subsequently his family removed to the south of Ireland, and he was sent to school in Belgium, where he remained for some years, acquiring a familiar knowledge of the French language, which he spoke throughout life with the ease and fluency of a native. He studied medicine in Dublin, and obtained the diplomas of L.R.C.S.I. and L.R.C.P.E. in 1866. Subsequently he became a graduate of the University of Aberdeen, where he took the degrees of M.B. and C.M. in 1875, and that of M.D. in 1883.

After qualifying in medicine he engaged for a short time in general practice, but in 1867 he was appointed assistant medical officer at the Durham County Asylum, and from that time he devoted himself to the study and treatment of insanity. He remained at the Durham Asylum for nearly seven years, and after leaving he travelled on the Continent and in the United States for the purpose of studying the condition of the insane, and the various provisions made for their care and treatment. On his return to England he became attached to the West Riding Asylum at Wakefield, then under the superintendence of Dr. (now Sir James) Crichton Browne. After a short residence there he was appointed in 1875 superintendent of the Hull Borough Asylum, which was at that time an old building situated inside the boundaries of the city, and very ill-adapted to its purpose. From the time of his appointment Dr. Wallis never ceased to urge upon the authorities the necessity of making some better provisions for the care of their insane patients, and at length he had the satisfaction of seeing a site for a new asylum purchased, and plans put in hand. The present building was subsequently erected from designs prepared by a local architect under his directions.

In 1878 he was appointed Superintendent of the Lancashire County Asylum at Whittingham, where he had greater scope for the display of his practical knowledge of asylum construction, and of the needs of the insane. For fifteen years he continued at the head of this large establishment, and under his management many important additions and improvements were effected. At his instigation the Lancashire Asylums Board determined to erect a special hospital for the treatment of recent cases at Whittingham, and plans for such a building had been prepared under his direction, when he was appointed a Commissioner in Lunacy on the resignation of Mr. Cleaton in 1894.

Dr. Wallis was a man of undoubted ability, and, though not a voluminous writer, he made some practical and thoughtful contributions to medical literature.

He was the first to call attention to the value of chloral in the treatment of epilepsy, and wrote an able paper on the subject in the *West Riding Asylum Reports*. He made a special study of the housing of the insane, and was anxious to see more thorough provision made for the early treatment of recent cases. He was the author of a valuable article on "The Treatment of Recent Cases of Insanity in Special Hospitals," contributed to this JOURNAL in 1894.

He was a man of broad sympathies and of benevolent disposition, generous, and kind-hearted almost to a fault, ever ready to encourage and assist those who needed sympathy or help. His old colleagues, and many others who knew him well, can recall many acts of practical sympathy and kindness towards those with whom he was brought into contact. As a superintendent he was eminently successful. His genuine kindness of heart and sympathetic manner endeared him to his patients, and his relations with those under his authority were always of the happiest kind. He took great interest in the welfare of attendants and nurses, many of whom have cause to remember him with gratitude. In private life he was a great favourite, being the life and soul of the circles in which he moved. Of late years, however, he went very little into society, leading, apart from his official duties, a somewhat retired life, and devoting himself to the supervision of his sons' education.

He married, in 1879, Louise, youngest daughter of the late T. W. Pearson, of Hull. His wife predeceased him about five years ago, but he leaves a family of four sons, to whom his comparatively early death will be an irreparable loss.

#### RINGROSE ATKINS.

By the demise, on the 4th of February, of Dr. Ringrose Atkins, Medical Superintendent of the Waterford District Asylum, at the early age of forty-seven, a striking personality has passed from amongst us. The call was startling in its suddenness, and many friends were hardly aware of his illness when the tidings of its fatal termination reached them. On Tuesday, the 1st, he began to feel the premonitory distress of the illness which was to carry him off so swiftly, notwithstanding which he went out in the afternoon to visit a lady. While in her house he was seized with more acute symptoms of the malady, and only reached home with difficulty. On Friday morning, after two days of intense suffering, he breathed his last, death being due to perforation from acute appendicitis, associated with the passage of a renal calculus.

A wave of genuine sorrow spread over all classes in the city of Waterford when the sad news became known. For Atkins was no ordinary man. His was a character rich, unique, and rare. In him intellectual talents of a high order were united to a sympathetic nature, generous feelings, and nobility of soul. And all were freely placed at the disposal of his fellow-men without distinction, high-born and humble, rich and poor. Wherever his help was needed that help was given; first of all to those who were his special charge, for towards the insane he always had a feeling of kindest interest, which even in maimed and shattered minds struck an answering chord, as was shown by the greeting of welcome he used to receive as he passed on his daily round through the wards. He never wearied in his efforts to cure or alleviate, and devoted a large portion of his time to entertaining his patients with his interesting lantern lectures, seaside excursions, and amusements of various kinds. And while, as he always did, making his patients the subjects of scientific observation, he never forgot that he was dealing with human souls. Outside his asylum work he was a leader in every good cause, and his labours in connection with the Young Men's Christian Association, of which he was President, and in furtherance of the cause of temperance, will not soon be forgotten.

Dr. Atkins sprang from a well-known Cork family, which contributed many members to the medical profession, including his paternal grandfather, his brother,