

James Thomson Bottomley, M.A., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S., F.C.S.

BOTTOMLEY, JAMES THOMSON, M.A., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S., F.C.S., who died in Glasgow on 18th May, was born in Belfast on 10th January 1845. His father was William Bottomley, J.P. of Belfast, and his mother a sister of the late Lord Kelvin. He was educated at Queen's College, Belfast, and Trinity College, Dublin, where he had a distinguished career and was gold Medallist at the degrees of B.A. and M.A. He started his scientific career by becoming Assistant to Professor Andrews of Belfast, and afterwards a demonstrator of chemistry and physics in King's College, London. In 1870 he came to the University of Glasgow to act as Arnott and Thomson demonstrator in the Department of Natural Philosophy, at the head of which was his uncle, Sir William Thomson. He held this position until 1899, when Lord Kelvin resigned from his professorship. He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1872.

Dr Bottomley was continuously engaged in research work, and his researches covered a very extensive field, including:—"On Loss of Heat by Radiation and Convection, and on Cooling in Vacuum," "The Heating Effects of Electric Currents," "On a Gravity Daniell Cell of very Low Internal Resistance," "On the Permanent Temperature of Conductors through which an Electric Current is Passing, and on Surface Conductivity and Emissivity," "On Contact Electricity in Common Air, Vacuum and different Gases," "On a Specimen of almost Unmagnetisable Steel," "On the Cooling of Wires in Air and in Vacuum," "Note on the Condensation of Gases at the Surface of Glass," "On the Electric Resistance of a New Alloy named Platinoid," "On Radiation of Heat from the same Surface at Different Temperatures," "A Mercurial Air Pump," "On Secular Experiments in Glasgow on Elasticity of Wires," "Description of Experiments for Determining the Electric Resistance of Metals at High Temperatures," "On Expansion and Contraction with Rise and Fall of Temperature in Wires under Elongating Stress," "On Radiation from Dull and Bright Surfaces," "On Thermal Radiation in Absolute Measure," "On a Practical Constant Volume Air Thermometer," "Note on Thermo-electric Position of Platinoid," etc. He published a book on theoretical mechanics in two parts, vol. i. on Dynamics and vol. ii. on Hydrostatics. But in this line he is best known as the author of "Four-Figure Mathematical Tables: Comprising Logarithmic and Trigonometric Tables, and Tables of Squares, Square Roots, and Reciprocals."

Dr Bottomley became associated with the business of Kelvin, Bottomley & Baird when the firm was floated as a private limited company in 1900, and on the death of Lord Kelvin in 1907 he was appointed chairman, a position which he continued to fill until his death. In recognition of his distinction as a scientific worker, and of his long and honourable connection with the University of Glasgow, the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him in November 1904.

M. M.