

## WILLIAM COOPER, 1900-1964

William Cooper died suddenly from an acute attack of asthma on 28th May, 1964. He had suffered from a chronic chest condition for the past few years, but this did not prevent him from attending regularly in the Department of Parasitology. He was supposed to be on part-time work; but he could not tear himself away from the laboratory, and was in the School most days, including the day before his death. He knew what Fate had in store for him, and left everything in beautiful order—in the Department, at his home, and in the disposition of his superannuation fund.

Cooper was born on 11th February, 1900, at King's Cross, and was a Londoner through and through. His father died when Cooper was only 13 years old, leaving a family of four boys and four girls in the charge of the mother, a wonderful woman and perhaps the origin of William's extraordinary qualities. He had to go out to work at this early age, for the family had little money; he worked as a "lab-boy" at the Royal Society of Medicine, and he was always proud of the fact that his earliest experiences in the laboratory were with Sir Ronald Ross. During the First World War, he served in the London Irish Rifles and the R.A.M.C., and then in 1919 joined the London School of Tropical Medicine (Albert Dock). For the remainder of his life, he was a faithful servant of the School, rising eventually to the post of Chief Technician and Class Demonstrator. He is survived by his widow and two sons, Colin and Anthony.

It is almost impossible to describe adequately Cooper's great gifts. He had a profound sense of loyalty to his successive chiefs, from the late Professor J. Gordon Thomson, to Colonel H. E. Shortt, and the present writer, all of whom bore him affectionate friendship. He accompanied Gordon Thomson on a prolonged visit to Rhodesia in 1933, on an investigation on blackwater fever, and went on several trips to the Arabian Gulf with Dr. R. G. Bird of the School, to work on amoebiasis. Technically, he excelled in the latter field, and probably Cooper's opinion on the identification of the human intestinal protozoa was unequalled in value.

Cooper played a great part in the researches on the exoerythrocytic cycle of the malaria parasite; he was a co-author of the Shortt-Cooper Giemsa colophonium staining procedure, essential in the



demonstration of these stages ; he was a collaborator in all the experiments, and in the work on *Plasmodium ovale*, gallantly volunteered to be infected by the bites of about a thousand mosquitoes, and then nine days later submitted to a laparotomy for the removal of a piece of liver. In the words of Sir Philip Manson-Bahr (Memoir No. 11 of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 1956), he attained everlasting fame by this episode. His participation in this experiment did not end here, for he stained the sections, found some of the exoerythrocytic schizonts, and painted them for what have become classical illustrations. Cooper was a fine artist, and his work adorns many papers and books.

Perhaps Cooper will be best remembered for his teaching of protozoology to successive classes of the D.T.M. & H. and to the advanced students of the Department. Thousands knew him, and regularly asked after him. He was an able and imaginative teacher, always devising new methods and aids for the recognition of the pathogenic protozoa.

Nobody is said to be irreplaceable ; this statement is untrue of Cooper, whose death leaves a gap which can never be filled.

*P. C. C. Garnham*