

Richard Taunton Francis, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

RICHARD TAUNTON FRANCIS, younger son of Dr William Francis, of the firm of Taylor and Francis, printers and publishers, was born in 1883. He was educated at St Paul's School, and on leaving school spent some months in his father's firm, becoming practically conversant with the work of the composing-room and reading department. He then resumed his studies at Göttingen University, but his university career was cut short by a very serious bicycle accident, by which it would seem that his liver was ruptured, and which necessitated immediate operation. He used to say that if the accident had happened in England he would probably have died, owing to the time which would have been spent in formalities, such as getting consent for operation. He was always in after years liable to pain in the region of the liver. Soon after returning from Germany he joined the firm, and on the death of Dr Francis in 1904 he became a partner with his elder brother William; after the retirement of the latter in 1917 he carried on the business of the firm alone.

The house of Taylor and Francis is well known in scientific circles, and specialises in scientific, and especially in zoological, publications. Three important journals, *The Philosophical Magazine*, *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, and *The Journal of Botany*, are the property of the firm; and though Francis disclaimed any pretensions to scientific knowledge, his name appeared on the *Annals* as one of the editors. In this journal he took, perhaps, a specially keen interest—an interest which was certainly not due to any financial success which it attained, for it was carried on for years at a loss. It would have been a calamity if this old and famous journal had been discontinued; and Francis deserves the thanks of zoologists and palæontologists for having seen it through its period of depression. The firm has, under contract with the India Office, published, since the inception of the series in 1888, *The Fauna of British India*, which now comprises some 40 volumes; and has also produced the stately tomes of Godman and Salvin's *Biologia Centrali-Americana*. The printing by the firm, partly in the days before he became a partner, of a number of sumptuous ornithological works was probably the cause of Francis's interest in ornithology. He became a Member of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1921; *Ibis*, the journal of the Union, is published by the firm.

After his marriage in 1908 Francis lived at Purley. On his holidays he often took up sea-fishing; his accident always prevented his doing anything which required much exertion. His health broke down two or three years ago, and for a long time he was unable to come up to town, though he continued to manage the business from his home; he appeared latterly to be regaining strength, and had begun to go to office again, but an attack of influenza led to pneumonia, from which he died on 13th February, at the age of 47. He leaves a widow and one son; a young daughter predeceased him.

He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1926.

J. S.