

Sir David Orme Masson, K.B.E., D.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.

SIR DAVID ORME MASSON, who died at Melbourne as Professor Emeritus of the University there on August 10, 1937, at the age of 79, had been a Fellow of this Society since 1885. He was born in London in 1858, and at an early age he accompanied his parents to Edinburgh on the appointment of his father, the late Professor David Masson, to the Regius Chair of English in the University. After four years' school education at the Edinburgh Academy he became, at the age of 15, a matriculated student of the University in the Faculty of Arts, and during the succeeding four years, besides taking other classes, he attended those of Mathematics with Kelland, Greek with Blackie, Natural Philosophy with Tait, and Chemistry with Crum Brown, and he received various class honours. He obtained the degrees of M.A. in 1877, B.Sc. in 1880, and D.Sc. in 1884, his thesis for the latter degree being entitled "The Nitrous and Nitric Ethers of Glyceryl." He was appointed to the Chair of Chemistry in the University of Melbourne in 1886.

After obtaining his degree in science he spent some time at Göttingen with Wöhler and Hübner, and was for a short period an assistant with Professor William Ramsay at Bristol. Thereafter he returned to Edinburgh, where he remained for about four years. This ante-Melbourne period was characterised by much youthful ardour and general buoyancy of spirits, which found congenial outlets in connection with the Tercentenary Celebrations of Edinburgh University, and in enthusiastic activity incidental to the founding of the Students' Representative Council and the Students' Union. Side by side with these various interests Masson carried on chemical research work in Crum Brown's laboratory, partly in collaboration and partly on subjects chosen by himself. The present writer possesses, bottled and labelled, specimen products of the former, and carries on his brow some indelible records of the latter that were conspicuously visible for more than a year and are still recognisable after fifty years. In retrospect upon this period, fadeless memories present themselves of a genial friendship associated with a charm of manner and a grace of diction that are seldom surpassed.

Shortly before leaving for Australia, Masson was married to Miss Mary Struthers, second daughter of Professor Sir John Struthers, M.D., of Aberdeen.

(See also *Obituary Notices of the Fellows of the Royal Society*, vol. ii, 1936-38, pp. 455-464.)

L. D.