

Obituary.

ROBERT KIDSTON, LL.D., F.R.S.

By DR. DONALD PATTON.

THE news of the death of Dr. Robert Kidston, LL.D., F.R.S., came as a great shock to the scientific world. Prior to his death he was engaged on a monumental monograph on "The Fossil Plants of the Carboniferous Rocks of Great Britain," which was to run into ten parts. Part VI was nearing completion, and, setting holidays aside, Dr. Kidston was busy on the final proofs and was speeding them on for publication when he passed away suddenly on July 12th, 1924. The most difficult portion of the work had been accomplished. The pity is that the great palæontologist was not permitted to finish the task.

Dr. Kidston was born at Bishopton House, Renfrewshire. He was educated at Stirling High School and later at Edinburgh University where he studied Botany under Professor Hutton Balfour. He was intensely interested in Natural Science, and early in his career he was an enthusiastic investigator of the Scottish Arctic Alpine Flora. The Breadalbanes had always an attraction for him, but primarily as a botanist. The British Herbarium of Glasgow University Botany Department is enriched by many of his discoveries.

But it is in his work as a Palæontologist that he stands out pre-eminent, and as such he was recognised by the Geological Survey not only of Britain but of other European Countries. Special reference ought to be made to his work on "The Fossil Osmundaceae" which he carried out conjointly with the late Professor Gwynne-Vaughan, and also to his work on the Fossils of the Rhynie Cherts (plant remains discovered in these Aberdeenshire rocks by Dr. Mackie of Elgin and Glasgow). This latter investigation Dr. Kidston undertook along with Professor Lang of Manchester.

To quote from an article by Professor Bower in the Glasgow Herald, "It hardly needs to be stated that Dr. Kidston was one of the most modest of men, prepared to consider carefully opinions

often less securely founded than his own. He was generous in assistance to others and always equally generous in his criticisms. In his technique he was unrivalled. An expert photographer, he used all his art in producing illustrations that present the details even more perfectly than the eye itself could see."

In addition to his associations with Glasgow University, Dr. Kidston was connected with the leading scientific bodies of Glasgow. He was a member of the Glasgow Natural History Society from 1879 and was President of that body from 1896-99. His connection with the Glasgow Geological Society dates from 1890, and from 1917 until 1920 he was President. To both of these societies he contributed many valuable papers.



Robert Kidston

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A brief biography of Robert Kidston can be found at the following web address:

<http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/8399/1/RKidston.pdf>