

RETIREMENT OF MR H. W. ROBINSON LIBRARIAN TO THE SOCIETY

MR H. W. ROBINSON retired from the office of Librarian on 31 March 1948, although the Society will fortunately still retain his services in connexion with certain Newtonian matters.

Mr Robinson was in the service of the Society long before most of the present Fellows had any connexion with it, for he joined the staff at the age of fourteen, 46 years ago, in 1902. Even in those days his work was connected with the Library, for he assisted both the chief clerk and the Librarian. In 1910 he had already found his vocation and became Library Assistant; soon he had compiled an index to the early *Proceedings*, which the Council ordered to be printed. In 1920 he compiled the card catalogue to which we all so often refer and in 1930 he was appointed Assistant Librarian. Five years later he was made Librarian, which post he has since held to the great satisfaction and to the general profit of the Society.

This period in the service of the Society, 46 years in all, has been twice broken by war. At the outbreak of the first world war Mr Robinson joined up as a private; he was promoted in the field and finished up as acting staff-captain. When the second world war broke out he performed invaluable work in seeing that the manuscripts and early printed books were safely conveyed to Wales, and for six months he worked there, finding and copying Newton letters, a service which is now proving most advantageous for the forthcoming edition of the letters. He was then recalled to London to work on the Central Register, where his knowledge of scientific personalities was of great service. In 1943 the Society found that it had urgent need of him, and since then he has been performing invaluable service, having, for instance, seen the library books brought back and arranged in their places with a minimum of inconvenience and disturbance.

Mr Robinson not only has a unique knowledge of the Society's

library and of its extensive and priceless archives, but is, as all Fellows know, at all times delighted to put this knowledge at the disposal of those interested—and they are a numerous band, drawn from many countries. All have experience not only of his specialized and intimate erudition, but also of his helpfulness. Whenever arrangements have had to be made for an exhibition at the Society, and Mr Robinson was informed of the kind of documents that were wanted, he has been able to say straight off what there was in the Society's possession and to produce it at an hour's notice. The care of the library and all that it contains has been not only his profession but his pleasure and his consuming interest. He has lived with it and become part of it.

His profound knowledge of our traditions has found expression in his well-known services to the history of science. In particular, he has devoted much time to the study of Robert Hooke, on whom he has lectured to learned societies. He identified the Diary of Robert Hooke in the British Museum, where it had been attributed to James Petiver, and would have published and edited it if he had not been forestalled. In conjunction with Walter Adams he edited the Diary of Hooke in the possession of the Guildhall Library, which was published in 1935. With Professor Harcourt Brown and Dr McKie he founded the *Annals of Science*, of which he has remained joint editor. He was actively associated with the foundation of the British Society for the History of Science, of which he is Honorary Treasurer. The study of the history of science in this country has no more devoted or helpful follower.

All Fellows of the Society will wish that some tribute should be paid to Mr Robinson's long association with the Society and to his learning and industry so well exercised on their behalf. They will be glad to know that Mr Robinson will not sever his formal connexion with the Society on 31 March, for the Officers have arranged for his services to be available to assist Professor Turnbull in editing the Newton Letters.