CENTENARIES

S. R. RANGANATHAN, M.A., L.T., F.L.A.
University Librarian, Madras.

Hutton, Charles (1737–1823)

CHARLES HUTTON, British Mathematician, was born on 14th August 1837 at Newcastle-on-Tyne. His father, who was a labourer, died when Charles was five years old. Through the recommendation of his stepfather, Charles worked as a 'hewer' in a pit. But his love of books soon diverted him from such labour and made him the village schoolmaster of Jesmond in his eighteenth year. After teaching his pupils in the day-time, he himself attended the evening classes in Newcastle and gained proficiency in mathematics. This enabled him to offer instruction in all branches of mathematics in Newcastle in 1770.

His Career

In 1773 the professorship of mathematics at the Royal Academy, Woolwich, became vacant and Hutton secured the place by coming out first in the competitive examination held for the purpose. He held the professorship for thirty-four years till he resigned it in 1807. He spent his retired life at Bedford Row, London, depending chiefly on his pension.

His Publications

Hutton published about ten mathematical books. The sixth book, entitled *Mathematical tables containing common hyperbolic and logistic logarithms* (1785) had an introduction, which is still valued as a learned history of logarithmic work. His most valuable work is the *Mathematical and philosophical dictionary*, which came out in 1795. His *Course of mathematics* was a popular text-book and went through several editions. He contributed several papers to the *Philosophical transactions* of the Royal Society and earned the Copley Medal. Hutton also assisted in drawing up the well-known abridgement of the *Philosophical transactions* in 18 volumes.

His Honours

Hutton was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1774. His estimate of the mean density of the earth, and his report on Maskelyne's observations on which his estimate was based elicited encomium from Laplace. In 1779 Hutton was elected Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society. In the same year, the University of Edinburgh made him an LL.D. On his retirement, the Board of Ordnance complimented him on the success of his work as a professor. Just before his death, he was consulted by the London Bridge Committee with regard to the proper curve which should be adopted in the design of bridges and he gave valuable advice. In 1822 a marble bust of his was presented to the Philosophical Society of Newcastle by his admirers and students.

Hutton died on January 27, 1823.

Harrison, Reginald (1837–1908)

REGINALD HARRISON, a British surgeon, was born at Stafford on 24th August 1837. Son of the Vicar of that place, Harrison prepared himself for the medical profession from the very beginning. He was admitted to M.R.C.S. in 1859 and after being house surgeon in several hospitals, he began private practice at Liverpool in 1864.

His Career

In 1864, Harrison was appointed demonstrator of anatomy at the Royal Infirmary school. In 1865 he was promoted lecturer on descriptive and surgical anatomy and in 1872, lecturer on the principles and practice of surgery. He became F.R.C.S. in 1866 and was on the staff of the Royal Infirmary, Liverpool, till 1889 when he was elected surgeon to St. Peter's Hospital, London, for stone and other urinary diseases. As Hunterian Professor of Surgery and Pathology of 1890–91, he delivered a course of lectures on stone in the bladder. As Bradshaw Lecturer of 1896, he dealt with vesical stone and prostatic disorders.

His Publications

Harrison published four books, three of which dealt with urinary disorders and the fourth was entitled *The use of ambulance in civil practice* (1881). He also contributed several articles to medical periodicals.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

Harrison was one of the pioneers of medical education in Liverpool. He was one of the enthusiastic band of workers who gradually lifted the Royal Infirmary school to the status of a University Faculty. Harrison also did much to establish the system of street ambulances which long made Liverpool famous amongst the British towns. He was also the Founder and President of the Metropolitan Street Ambulance Association. His delight was unbounded when his son-in-law, who was Commissioner of the City Police, launched the "White Swan", as the first ambulance car of the city was dubbed.

HIS HONOURS

In recognition of his ambulance work, Harrison was made a Knight of Grace of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Also, the Khedive of Egypt conferred upon him the First Class of the Imperial Order of Medjideh in appreciation of his services to the School of Medicine at Cairo, which he inspected on behalf of the Royal College of Surgeons, England. He took an active part in reconstructing, with donations of duplicate copies, the medical section of the Toronto Library which was destroyed by fire in 1890.

Harrison died in London on April 28, 1908.

ASTRONOMICAL NOTES.

1. **Planets during September 1937.**—Venus will continue to be a bright object visible early in the morning before sunrise, its stellar magnitude being $-3{\cdot}4$. On September 24 there will be a close approach to the bright star Regulus (α Leonis), the planet passing within an angular distance of one third of a degree from the star. Mercury will be in conjunction with the sun on September 14; it will attain greatest elongation (18° W.) on September 30 and can be seen as a morning star for a few days about this date. Mars will be moving eastwards in the constellation Scorpio and gradually getting fainter; it will be in quadrature with the Sun on September 14.

Jupiter will resume its eastward motion among the stars about the middle of the month and will continue to be conspicuously visible in the evening sky, crossing the meridian, soon after sunset. Saturn is in the constellation Pisces and in a favourable position for observation, being in opposition to the sun on Setpember 25; its stellar magnitude at the time will be $0{\cdot}7$.

2. **Comets.**—Information has been received of the discovery on July 4 of a new comet (the sixth to be discovered this year) by Mr. Finsler at Zurich. It was a fairly bright object of about the seventh magnitude at the time of discovery and was situated in the constellation Perseus. The daily motion was towards the north and east, and from the orbits calculated, the date of perihelion passage appears to be about August 12. The comet has been observed to have a small nucleus and a short tail of about a degree in length.

Whipples' comet (1937 *b*) can still be observed with instruments of moderate size. It has been rapidly moving southwards and was in the constellation Corona Borealis at the end of last month. An orbit has been computed by Mr. Kellaway for comet Wilk-Peltier (1937 *c*) from available observations upto May 2. The orbit is elliptical and the date of perihelion passage, 1937 February 21. The period derived is 589 years, but it is still somewhat uncertain.
