Obituary.

CHARLES EDWARD CASSAL.

ALTHOUGH not a member of this Society at the time of his death, Col. Cassal for many years took a very prominent part in its proceedings. He was Vice-President during the years 1893, 1894, 1899 and 1900, Secretary during 1897 and 1898, and served for three periods on the Council.

He was the eldest son of Professor H. S. Cassal, LL.D., of University College, London, and was born in London in 1858.

Educated at University College School, where he had as contemporaries Professor Percy Frankland and Dr. Teed, he carried off many prizes. He was originally intended for the sea, but eventually began a less adventurous career by entering University College, where he studied Chemistry under Williamson and Graham, obtained various medals for Chemistry, and took honours in the Preliminary Science Examination of the University of London; but circumstances prevented him from proceeding to the degree.

In 1879 he was appointed Demonstrator of Hygiene and Public Health under Professor Corfield, and this, no doubt, turned his attention to that branch of Chemistry which ultimately became his life's work.

In 1884 he passed the Associateship examination of the Institute of Chemistry, at a time when he could easily have obtained admission without that ordeal.

His first appointment as Public Analyst was for Chepping Wycombe in 1884. He gained the Kensington appointment at the end of the same year, that for St. George's, Hanover Square (afterwards merged into the City of Westminster) in 1886, that for Battersea in 1888, and two years later the county appointments for two of the "parts" of Lincolnshire, Kesteven and Holland.

During his student days, and for some time after, he was assiduous in cultivating the art of public speaking, and his great natural gifts in this direction were fostered and developed by the prominent part he took in the proceedings of the University College Debating and the Belsize Societies and the North London Parliament, in all of which he attained high office. Before the demands of a large practice became too insistent he did much popular lecturing on scientific subjects. The experience he thus gained stood him in good stead all through his life, and enabled him to establish excellent relations with the authorities he served. He was remarkably successful in inducing them to realise the importance of the work of the Public Analyst, and to recognise that, as a professional man, he was worthy of adequate remuneration. He was always jealous of his professional reputation, and was probably unique in having issued a writ against, and exacted a public apology from, a Councillor for remarks made in committee reflecting on his work. Beyond this, however, by sheer force of character, and by his clear and vigorous speeches, he did much to bring about the better administration of the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts. He was largely influential in starting the campaign against the use of preservatives in foods, and gave important evidence before various Parliamentary and Departmental Committees on that and allied subjects.

His readiness in debate brought him early into prominence in the various scientific societies to which he belonged.

While he was keenly interested in the scientific problems connected with his work, his natural bent really lay in other directions. As soon as he became established in analytical practice he realised the ambiguous position occupied by the profession in those days, and took a leading part in the movements for raising its status. He was a, if not the, prime mover in one which culminated in what was afterwards described by one of the journals as "A Hot Night at the Chemical Society," during which, before a packed meeting, a fierce battle took place over the lax methods of admitting new members which then prevailed, and the slashing attack he made on the existing system and all who upheld it did much to decide the issue.

At the Institute of Chemistry, of which he became a Censor, and on the Council of which he served for no less than six periods, his great ability as a fighter found ample scope, and he did much to mould the policy of the Institute with regard to matters of professional conduct, as well as with regard to the elevation

of the profession as a whole. His views on these matters, frequently in advance of the times, were expressed with a vigour and fearlessness which earned the respect of all. It is only a testimonial to the power of his influence to mention that he sometimes led the Council into paths which it was afterwards loth to follow, and disappointment with this had, no doubt, much to do with his taking a chief part in the formation of the "Institute of Chemical Technologists," of which he was the first President. Aware, as he was, of the difficulties that would beset the path of the new body, he led it, perhaps as a forlorn hope, with characteristic courage and energy.

His work took him much into the Law Courts, where he figured in many important cases, and, as would be expected, he was a most excellent expert witness. The air of conviction with which he gave his evidence, and his adroitness and readiness in reply to awkward questions, made him much more formidable than many who were equipped with greater knowledge of the point at issue. While he read but few papers before this Society, he was nevertheless almost as active with the pen as with his tongue. In his earlier days he was a constant contributor to the *British Medical Journal*, to which he acted as advisor on matters of chemical interest, and he was one of the first to issue lengthy annual reports on the work done for the authorities appointing him. In 1899 he founded the *British Food Journal*, of which he was editor for 15 years.

Of his other activities it is unnecessary to write at any length in this Journal. They have been admirably and fully set forth in the *British Food Journal* by his son, Mr. Noel Cassal. It will be sufficient to say that he was a keen volunteer from his youth, worked his way up to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and was only precluded by the age limit from being accepted for active service during the war. Further evidence of his ability as an organiser lies in the fact that after having commanded for six years a battalion of Engineers, he undertook the difficult task of transforming it into a brigade of heavy artillery, one of the most highly specialised branches of the service.

In Freemasonry he attained the highest honours, and it was obvious to those who knew him that he did not enter into it as a hobby or amusement, but that its tenets formed a guiding principle of his life.

His kindness to the younger members of his profession will be long remembered by many who have benefited by his advice as well as by the influence he was able to exert on their behalf.

Great as were his gifts as a speaker, he was a man of action, and a strenuous worker too, and his sincerity, his forceful character, and his strong convictions, tempered by a delightful and characteristic sense of humour, marked him out as a leader of men, and enabled him to achieve a high, and in some ways unique, position in the profession he was fated to adopt. It is only to be regretted that it was not one in which his peculiar and outstanding abilities could find their fullest scope.

CECIL H. CRIBB.