

MEMOIRS

CHARLES DANIEL HIGHAM

CHARLES DANIEL HIGHAM (our President of 1900) died on Monday, 1st July, at his London home, No. 8, Avenue Road, Regent's Park. He had passed his 86th birthday, having been born on the 1st March, 1849. His end was peace. A long, successful and happy life terminated in the normal exhaustion of his faculties and the gradual wasting away of his bodily powers.

Higham was the elder son of his distinguished father, John Adams Higham, who was a prominent figure in actuarial circles by reason both of his scientific endowments and his position as Actuary to the Royal Exchange Assurance. John Adams Higham had fairly won his place among the leading experts in the early days of actuarial research and might almost be classed with such pioneers as Woolhouse, Makeham and Sprague. Thus the subject of our Memoir may be said to have been, in a professional sense, born in the purple. It is this perhaps that led to his being satisfied with a lessened achievement in original and inspiring work than his abilities would have justified. Lacking the spur of necessity, he dealt with things very capably and intelligently but without exhausting his energies to anticipate or penetrate those hidden paths of knowledge which were only open to vigorous and intensely interested minds. And yet to those who came under his influence early in his career—let us say rather more than 50 years ago—it was always obvious that Higham could have done far higher work, in fact have achieved real eminence, if he had exerted his faculties to the utmost. His insight into the form and true bearing, upon many actuarial problems, of the Death Strain may be cited as an instance of his originality and perhaps of an indication of the contributions he could have made, had circumstances so willed it, to our scientific literature.

Official records show that Higham submitted two papers at sessional meetings of the Institute, (1) on the True Measure of the Death Strain on the Funds of a Life Assurance Society, (2) a Proposal for the Amendment of the Law relating to the Assignment of Policies of Life Assurance, in addition to his Presidential Address, and made other contributions to our Proceedings and to the *Journal*. On his eightieth birthday at the urgent request of his colleagues he had printed for private circulation some historical notes relating to the Actuaries' Club, the Institute of Actuaries, the Institute of Actuaries' Club, and the Life Offices' Association.

Higham became a Fellow by examination in 1874, having passed Part I in 1870, Part II in 1871 and Part III in 1873. He acted as Auditor in 1873, was elected to the Council for the first time in 1886 and was a member of that body for 23 years. He had also been an Examiner on six occasions. Elected Treasurer to the Institute in 1898 and 1899 he

became a Vice-President from 1892-96 and President in 1900 and 1901. He was a member of the Joint Committee on Mortality Investigation of the combined experience of British Life Offices (1863-93).

On the official side, Higham received his early business training in the Rock Life Assurance Company and in 1872 joined the Metropolitan Life as Assistant Actuary. In 1889 he was appointed Actuary of the Economic Life and in 1891 Actuary and Secretary (afterwards Actuary and Manager) of the London Life Association of which he was a Director at the time of his death.

It may be questioned whether Higham had not a greater influence upon the profession, which was in an adolescent stage in his days, by his personal characteristics, than he would have done had he entered the lists against his famous contemporaries and predecessors. Believing that character was more desirable than ability, that "breeding was better than brains" (as he once said to the present writer), that sympathy, courtesy and consideration for others were the best currency in the varied dealings of man with man, Higham led his friends and juniors into the primrose path of success and happiness through devotion to duty, self-sacrifice and earnest study. Among his personal attributes were, also, an unusual degree of the power of eloquent expression, and his almost fastidious insistence upon the minor offices of professional life being carried out upon the highest level. Dealing with the first point, I well remember his allocution delivered at the Institute of Actuaries on the death of Queen Victoria (*J.L.A.* Vol. xxxvi, p. 1). I was profoundly impressed with the stately dignity of this utterance, and at the moment I thought that nothing nobler or more strikingly appropriate had fallen from the lips of any public man. His speech at a meeting of the Institute in October 1927, when a Gold Medal was presented to the late George King, was of the same high order.

Higham has passed, and his friends must bow in sadness to their loss. The whole actuarial world will wish to offer the deepest sympathy to the widow of one who lifted its banner high during his long and honourable life.

G. H. RYAN

SVEN PALME

THE Swedish insurance world suffered a great loss when Mr Sven Palme died on the 9th August 1934. For fully thirty years he was one of its most outstanding personalities, whose influence had been exerted with beneficial results in various directions.

Born on the 4th December 1854, at Kalmar, Mr Sven Palme commenced active life as a lieutenant in the Swedish Regiment of Artillery. Developing the study of mathematics, he became an instructor in this subject. In 1883, however, he took the post of assistant actuary to the Victoria Insurance Company under the distinguished actuary Professor Gösta Mittag-Leffler. In 1885 he was appointed Life Manager of the Scandia, and in 1888 General Manager of the Thule. With the latter