

**Grafton Elliot Smith**, Kt., M.A.(Cantab), M.D., Ch.M.(Sydney), Litt.D.(Manc.), Hon. M.D.(Adelaide, Egypt), Hon. D.Sc.(Liv., Belf., Brist.).

SIR GRAFTON ELLIOT SMITH was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Society in 1934, in recognition of his valuable contributions to Biological Science, and of his outstanding position as an anatomist and anthropologist.

He was born in 1871 at Grafton, New South Wales, and received his early scientific training at the University of Sydney. At a very early period in his career he was drawn to the study of the brain, and he was fortunate in having the opportunity to obtain fresh monotreme and marsupial material, and to examine it in Professor J. T. Wilson's laboratory. This work led to new interpretations of the hippocampal formations and the cerebral commissures, and upon this foundation he raised a notable superstructure of fact and theory which revolutionised our knowledge of cerebral morphology.

Among many other things he showed how a small primordium in the reptilian brain, situated between the pyramidal lobe and the hippocampal region of the archencephalon, in which the sense of smell is alone represented, expanded in the mammals into the grey cortex or the neopallium as he termed it. In this the other senses came to be represented and were definitely located, while the motor function was taken over from the primitive corpus striatum by another region which became the psychomotor area. He traced the history of the areas through the mammals, and showed how in the Primates there was a great expansion of the visual area, as the sense of sight, and the power of stereoscopic vision came to dominate the instinctive life of the animal instead of the sense of smell as in lower mammals.

He migrated to Cambridge from Australia in 1895, where the fundamental importance of his researches was at once recognised, and the official seal set upon them by his election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1907. In the year 1900 he went to Cairo as Professor of Anatomy. There and during vacations in England his morphological researches were ardently pursued, but he also, with characteristic insight and energy, exploited the great mass of anatomical material yielded by the exploration of the tombs. Further, his imagination was caught and held by what Egypt had to tell of the history of mankind in the remote past.

He returned to England in 1909 as Professor of Anatomy at Man-

chester. Here his interests expanded to embrace some of the root problems of cultural anthropology. The problem of the origin and spread of culture over the globe was added to those of pure morphology, and he began the series of studies which occupied much of his time and energy in later years. He became the chief supporter of the "Diffusion" theory in this country. For the anatomist his work on the brain will form his enduring monument—and it held him all his life. He had great fertility of ideas, and new facts wherever culled, wrought on by his suggestive mind, were fitted with sure instinct into the framework of his own researches. His writings and discourses on cultural anthropology were perhaps better known to the general public, but both professional and lay readers much appreciated his contributions to the story of human evolution, and his fascination as lecturer and writer received wide recognition. His presentation of the subject was firmly based, of course, on his studies on the comparative anatomy of the brain, and at the human level came in his work on fossil human crania. The cast of the interior of the brain-case to the discerning eye yields evidences of the relative development of areas of the brain known to subserve special activities. Elliot Smith was able to assess, not only the morphological points of these rare specimens, which indicate the place of each in the human phylum, but he was also able to give hints as to the mental life of the early progenitors of *Homo sapiens*. It may be noted that during the Great War Elliot Smith gave valuable services to the victims of the strife by bringing his knowledge of neurology and psychology to the care and cure of soldiers suffering from head injuries or shell-shock.

He received many honours, among them the award of a Royal Medal by the Council of the Royal Society in 1912. He was Vice-President of the Society in 1913–14. He received the honour of Knighthood in 1934.

He died on January 1, 1937.

See also *Obituary Notices of Fellows of the Royal Society*, vol. ii, No. 6, 1938.

T. H. B.