



Person: Fraser, John (1820 – 1909)
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OBITUARY

Dr JOHN FRASER, a native of GLASGOW, AND A Non-Resident Fellow of the Society since the year 1865, died at Wolverhampton in April last. In reply to inquiry, his daughter writes that she has asked an old friend of his - Mr ¹Joseph Hough of Codsall Wood - to write a short notice, and I cannot do better than read to you what he has written of his friend:-

"John Fraser was born in Glasgow on 22nd March 1820 and died 13th April 1909. He was the eldest son of David Fraser, the noted stonemason, of whom a short account is given in Hugh Miller's 'My Schools and Schoolmasters.' He took his M.A. degree in 1843 at Glasgow University, where he acquired an extensive and accurate knowledge of classics, the study of which he never laid wholly aside even in the busiest part of his professional life. After he was eighty he read the whole of the 'Iliad', and in the last three years of his life he found pleasure in reading Cicero's Letters. He also read regularly the Hebrew Bible, especially the Psalms, always a source of joy and comfort to him. Whilst a medical student at Glasgow, where he took the degree of M.D. in 1852, he was accustomed to go with Professor Arnott on botanical expeditions. After being house surgeon at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, he was a general practitioner during the years 1852 - 1854 at Byers Green and Gainford, Durham, and from 1854 to 1906 at Wolverhampton, where he held various medical appointments.

In 1863 he took part in the founding of the Dudley and South Staffordshire Field Club. At that time he was a busy doctor with only scanty leisure but this he devoted mainly to botany and geology, and in his holidays he made excursions far and near to gather, as far as possible, a complete set of British flowering plants and mosses. His principal companions in these excursions were Mr Edwin Lees of Worcester, Mr Joseph Thompson, Vicar of Cradley, Mr. Wm. Mathews and Mr James Bagnall of Birmingham.

*He made a complete set of the British mosses given in Wilson's Bryologica Britannica, adding two new species - *Amblystegium Confervoides*, which he discovered in Dovedale in 1866 and *Stereodon Bambergeri*, which he discovered on Ben Lawers in 1867.*

*His collection of flowering plants is very full, especially in the genera *Rubus*, *Hieracium*, and *Salix*, to which he added the new species *Salix Holoserica*, Willd.*

He also made a very fine collection of most of the typical British fossils, and was elected F.G.S. in 1892. He was a deeply religious man, always actively benevolent, and his 'Nil nisi Cruce' was exemplified in every action of his long, well-spent life.

J.H."

¹ Joseph Hough (1837 - 1924) sometime astronomer to the second Lord Wrottesley and later Head of Burnley Grammar School. Retired to Codsall Wood, near Wrottesley, Staffordshire.