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1903 June 13: *Leeds Mercury

A NOTED YORKSHIRE BOTANIST.

R. V. T. contributes the following sketch of the Rev. Wm. Williamson Newbould, a noted botanist:-

Born at Sheffield on January 20th, 1819, William Williamson Newbould was the son of merchant trading with Russia. From a preparatory school near Doncaster, he proceeded to Trinity College, Cambridge, whence he graduated B.A. in 1842, and M.A. in 1845. Ordained deacon in 1844, and priest in 1845, he became curate of Bluntisham, Hunts; and in 1848 of Comberton, Cambridgeshire; but subsequently refused least one living from conscientious motives.

About 1860 Mr. Newbould took up his residence at Turnham Green, London, spending much of his time in the botanical department and reading-room of the British Museum. He afterwards lived for some years at Albany-street, Regent's Park; and, after taking temporary duty at Honington, Warwickshire, during a vacancy, in 1879 moved to Kew Green. Here, during the last seven years of his life, he constantly took part in the services at Kew and Petersham churches. He died at Kew, April 16th, 1886, and was buried in Fulham Cemetery. He was married to a niece of the Rev. Jas. Fendale, Rector of Comberton, who survived him.

Newbould was a Fellow of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh in 1841, an original member of the Ray Society in 1844, and a Fellow of the Linnaean Society in 1863. His interest in botany began at his first school, and fostered by the lectures of John Bohler at Sheffield, was intensified by the lectures of Professor J. S. Henslow, and the friendship of Mr. C. E[sic]. Babington and Mr. Fred. Townsend at Cambridge. In 1842 he visited Jersey, in 1845 Scotland, in 1848 Wales, in 1852 the North, and in 1858 the South Ireland, the last four excursions being made in company with Prof. Babington; and in 1862 they joined Mr. Jacques Gay in North Wales. He also made several botanical excursions to the North of England.

Though Newbould's knowledge of British botany was almost unrivalled, he can hardly be said to have published anything in his own name. The title page of the fifth volume of the Supplement to English Botany (1865) bears his name; but he always disclaimed all responsibility for it. He also signs, with Mr. J. G. Baker, the introduction the second edition of his friend H. C. Watson's "Topographical Botany," 1883, upon which he bestowed much labour. His acute discrimination added five or six species to our knowledge of the British flora; but all his attainments were employed in helping other scientific workers rather than in making a reputation for himself. His name is commemorated by a beautiful genus of Bignoniaceae Newbouldia, dedicated in 1863 by Dr. Seeman, to "one of the most painstaking of British Botanists." His herbarium is largely incorporated that of Dr. Trimen in the British Museum, and most of his manuscript note books are preserved in the botanical department.

In addition to botany, Newbould was much interested in phrenology (the great phrenologist Spurzheim having, as he was pleased to relate, nursed him, as a boy, on his knees), and also spiritualism. A total abstainer and almost a vegetarian, he exhibited practical sympathy with the wants of others, and especially the poor.