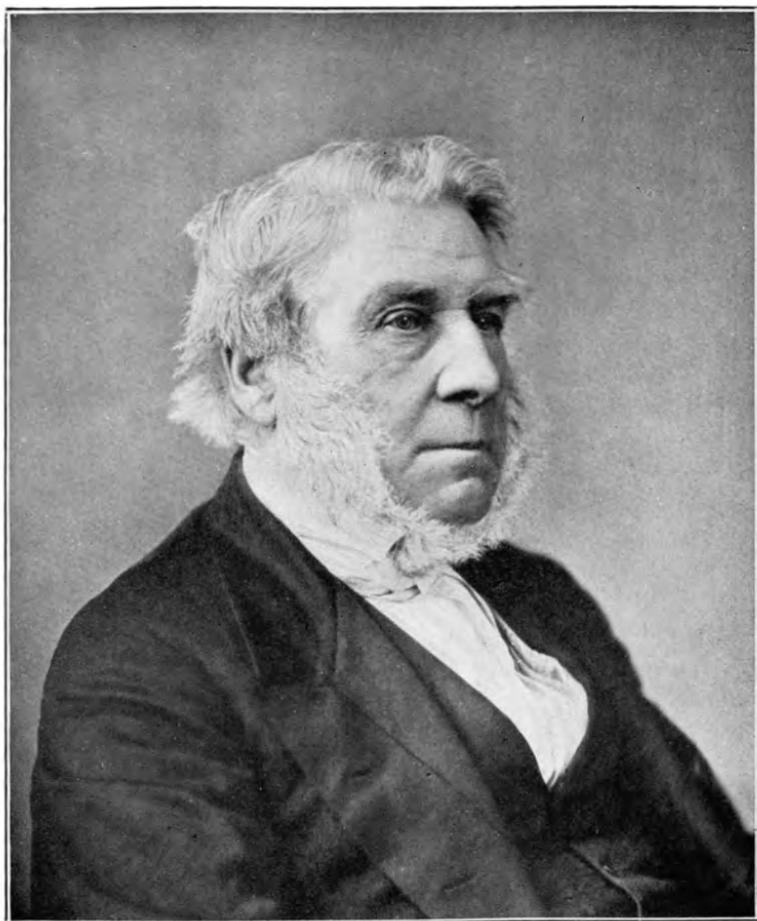


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From a photograph]

JAMES GLAISHER, F.R.S.

[by A. J. Melhuish.

OBITUARY OF JAMES GLAISHER, ESQ., F.R.S.

MR. JAMES GLAISHER, F.R.S., who was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Fund for 20 eventful years, was born in London on April 7th, 1809—the year that gave to the world Bismarck, Gladstone, and other illustrious men—and died at Croydon on February 7th last, in his 94th year. Before he was twenty he was appointed a Civil Assistant of the Ordnance Survey Department, which was then engaged in carrying out the Principal Triangulation of Ireland—a work which attracted men of such calibre as Professor Tyndal, Rev. T. A. Southwood, to whom the Modern Department of Cheltenham College owed so much, and Mr. Tovey, one of the masters of the same school. Mr. Glaisher always retained his interest in the national survey, and I well remember the pleasure it gave him, some 25 years ago, to renew his acquaintance with the office in the Phoenix Park in which he had worked in early youth.

It was during his work on the storm-swept, cloud-capped mountains of Ireland that his interest in meteorology was first awakened. The long hours of waiting and watching until a break in mist or cloud enabled a clear view to be obtained of the trigonometrical station on some distant peak were characteristically occupied in noting the formation and colours of the clouds, and all those changes in the weather which had such an important influence on the progress of the work upon which he was engaged. In 1833 he became an assistant in Cambridge Observatory, and in 1836 an assistant in the astronomical department of the Greenwich Observatory. In 1840 he was appointed Superintendent of the Magnetic and Meteorological Department at Greenwich, a post which he held until his retirement from the public service in 1874.

Mr. Glaisher initiated the publication of the quarterly and annual reports on meteorology issued by the Registrar-General, but it was in 1862 that his name became generally known in connection with the experiments conducted by the British Association for the purpose of meteorological investigations in the higher regions of the air. He made more than 30 balloon ascents, and of these the most daring, and that which attracted the greatest attention, was made on September 5th, 1862. On this occasion he and Mr. Coxwell

reached the great height of 37,000 feet, or seven miles. He was the founder of the Royal Meteorological Society; occupied the presidential chair of the Royal Microscopic Society and of the Photographic Society, and wrote more than a hundred books and papers relating to astronomy, meteorology, and the theory of numbers.

The subscribers to the Fund are well aware of Mr. Glaisher's long connexion with its work, but they are probably not so well acquainted with the many services which he rendered to it during the last 35 years. A member of the General Committee almost from the foundation of the Fund, he joined the Executive Committee as far back as 1867, and from the first took the greatest interest in the successive expeditions that were sent out to the Holy Land. As might have been expected, he at once took special charge of everything connected with the climate and meteorology of Palestine, and the subscribers are greatly indebted to him for the many valuable papers on the subject which he contributed to the *Quarterly Statement*. Last year he prepared a paper on the meteorology of Jerusalem, in which he discussed the barometer and thermometer readings of the last 20 years, and the rainfall of the last 40 years. This last contribution to the work of the Fund has now been published in a pamphlet, which he was able to correct in proof before his final illness.

During his long term of office as Chairman, Mr. Glaisher watched with unremitting care the conduct of the surveys and excavations in Palestine, and the publication of the reports by which their results were made known to the subscribers. He very rarely missed a meeting of the Committee, and was ever ready to further any scheme which he thought would be to the interest of the Fund. His genial manner, and unusual energy and vitality will long be remembered by his colleagues. He seemed so strong and sound that when the Committee presented him with an address upon his entering his ninetieth year there was every reason to hope that he might live for another ten years, and complete his century. Even when increasing deafness obliged him to resign his position as Chairman, no one expected that the end would come so soon. After a long strenuous life he now rests in peace beneath the shadow of Shirley Church.

C. W. W.