



GEORGE BUCHANAN GRAY, D.D., D.LITT., MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD.

THE LATE DR. GEORGE BUCHANAN GRAY.

THE late Dr. G. B. Gray was born at Blandford, Dorset, on January 13th, 1865. He was educated at New College and University College, London, studied abroad at Marburg, and proceeded to Mansfield College, Oxford, where he obtained all the Hebrew and Semitic honours. Appointed teacher at Mansfield, he became a member of the Independent Ministry in 1893, and in due course was a zealous member of the Council of Mansfield Settlement in Canning Town. Making friends everywhere by his true Christian courtesy and sincerity, he speedily established a reputation for sound scholarship which made him looked up to as the most active and thorough of contemporary Hebraists and biblical scholars.

Already in 1896 he made his mark by the expansion of a University Prize Essay on "Hebrew Proper Names," in which he showed how this apparently barren, or at least academic, subject was of the first importance for the deeper study of biblical problems. His commentaries in the International Critical Commentary Series were on all sides regarded as patterns of patient learning and good judgment, and an extensive work on "Hebrew Poetry" (1915) is only one of many examples of his breadth and versatility. Numerous articles in Oriental and theological journals and in Bible dictionaries and encyclopaedias testify to his untiring zeal, and it is no exaggeration to say that his pen illuminated everything to which it was turned. This is not the place for any minute account of his literary labours, but it may be said, as an illustration of the confidence he engendered, that one of the last of his activities was to write, for the "Cambridge Ancient History," a series of sections on the early history of the Persian Empire. Recognising that this subject required a scholar who could use the published sources with independence, one, too, who had a broad knowledge of ancient Oriental life and thought, the editors applied to Dr. Gray, who was able practically to complete the work before his tragically sudden death.

Among his various distinctions was that of Honorary D.D., which was conferred upon him by the University of Aberdeen. He was

able, despite the many demands upon his time, to serve as a member of the Executive Committee from 1906 onwards, and, as already mentioned above (p. 1), he acted as Chairman during the long illness of Dr. King, from October, 1918, until Dr. Hogarth was appointed Chairman on October 9th, 1919. Here as elsewhere he at once made himself felt by his integrity and sturdy common-sense. He was one upon whose opinion one could rely, and, as many of his friends know, "What does Gray think?" was the question invariably put before one embarked further upon any plan. That he will be missed by all who had come to know and appreciate him need hardly be said. Scholarship is the poorer by the premature loss of a man who represented all that was best in research; and though we mourn his death, we feel that he set a standard of energy and conscientiousness at which we have to aim.

Dr. Masterman writes of his first meeting with Dr. Gray when travelling east of the Jordan. "Our friendship so formed continued until the end. His visit to Palestine inspired in him a keenness which I knew well, and caused me to suggest his name as a member of the Executive Committee. We all know how active and valued a member of the Committee he has been."
