

OBITUARY NOTICE.

ARNOLD STEVENSON, M.B.E.

1874—1948.

ARNOLD STEVENSON was born in London on the 9th July 1874 and was the son of the well-known architect J. J. Stevenson, F.R.I.B.A.; his mother, née Jane Omond, came of an Orkney family. After attending a preparatory school near his home in Bayswater Stevenson went to Winchester in 1888. While there he did well in Mathematics, and then became greatly interested in Natural Science, particularly in Chemistry. He was also a very keen member of the Rifle Corps, in which he held the rank of Colour Sergeant, the highest attained by anyone who was not a master. He represented Winchester in the competition for the Ashburton Shield at Bisley.

In 1893 Stevenson won a Minor Scholarship to Clare College, Cambridge, and in 1894 a Foundation Scholarship. He lost a year through illness and took the Natural Sciences Tripos, Part I, in 1897, and Part II the following year. After studying for a year in Aachen he joined the Z Lamp Co. who manufactured incandescent lamps near Wimbledon.

Soon after the outbreak of the first World War Stevenson offered his services to Professor (later Sir Jocelyn) Thorpe who at that time led a team of pupils at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, engaged in the manufacture of drugs for the use of the Services. Here Stevenson was associated with Miss H. M. Judd and the writer, who found the meticulously painstaking newcomer a great help.

When the Ministry of Munitions was founded Stevenson went to the Optical Glass Section; he was given the M.B.E. for his services there in 1918. In the following year he decided to do research in Organic Chemistry and joined Thorpe's school at South Kensington, where he stayed for some years. Here again his love of order and method proved valuable. He published a number of papers in collaboration with Thorpe and Kon, and then worked with a junior collaborator. His papers dealt mainly with the formation of tetrahydronaphthalene derivatives (with Kon, *J.*, 1921, 87; with Thorpe, *J.*, 1922, 1717; with Attwood and Thorpe, *J.*, 1923, 1755). Following up this work he made the interesting observation that an oxidation product of a tetrahydronaphthalene derivative exhibited a novel form of tautomerism, for which the term ring-chain tautomerism was coined (with Kon and Thorpe, *J.*, 1922, 650). In the search for other examples of such tautomerism Stevenson re-examined an oxidation product of camphor known as Balbiano's acid (*loc. cit.*) the preparation of which was a particularly arduous piece of work. This, and the lengthy preparation of suberone (with Day and Kon, *J.*, 1920, 639), he undertook cheerfully.

In the early 1920's Thorpe's research school was growing rapidly and there arose problems in the supply of research chemicals for the numerous students. Stevenson became interested in this and for a number of years ran a "shop" where ethyl malonate, ethyl cyanoacetate, and many other chemicals, procured in bulk, were sold to students without profit. To this task he devoted himself with enthusiasm and meticulous care, and many generations of research students will remember the somewhat stooping, grey figure of "Steve," as he was affectionately nicknamed, carefully doling out research materials.

Personally, Stevenson was of a shy and retiring disposition. An old bachelor, he spent much of his leisure at the Savile Club and had a vast store of memories about the academic world, particularly that centred about his old University. He took a great interest in the careers of his friends although he himself was not ambitious and might well have achieved more had he so chosen. With his passing we mourn a courteous gentleman of an old and vanishing kind, and a very loyal friend.

G. A. R. KON.