

MEMORIAL OF EDWARD SYDNEY SIMPSON*

It came as a great shock to his many friends and colleagues to hear of the death, due to heart failure, of Dr. E. S. Simpson, Government Mineralogist & Analyst for the State of Western Australia, at his home in South Perth, on August 30th. Dr. Simpson had a distinguished scientific career, and played a prominent part in the affairs of the Australian Chemical Institute in Western Australia; he was a foundation member and the first branch president—an office he subsequently held on two occasions. On completion of a period of ten years of continuous service he was presented with the gold medal instituted by the Branch for meritorious service. He also gained the H. G. Smith Memorial Medal.

Edward Sydney Simpson was born in 1875 at Sydney, N.S.W., the son of W. H. Simpson, merchant. He had a brilliant career at the Sydney Grammar School and the University of Sydney, winning numerous prizes and scholarships. He graduated in 1895 with the degree of B.E. in mining and metallurgy. His first appointment was as a research chemist at the Russell Silver Mine, Rivertree, N.S.W.; then followed a period as assayer at the Mt. Morgan Gold Mine, Q. In 1897, when only 22 years of age, he was offered the position of Mineralogist and Assayer and Chief Chemist to the W.A. Mines Department. From then onwards he devoted himself to the service of the State and to the Commonwealth, specializing in mineralogy and geochemistry. He took an active part in inaugurating the Perth Technical School, and later in the establishment of the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, of which he was for some years a member of the official board of control. In 1914 he received the degree of B.Sc. with honors in the University of Western Australia, and in 1919 the degree of D.Sc. was conferred on him for his thesis on "The Mineralogy of Western Australia."

In 1922 the chemical work of the Mines Department was reorganized, and Dr. Simpson was appointed Government Mineralogist and Analyst, with charge of the combined Health, Mineral, and Agricultural laboratories. He served for many years on various departmental committees connected with water supplies, foods, drugs and oils. He was a member of the State Committee of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and of the Australian National Research Council. In 1926, he was appointed Chairman of the Australian Committee for Ceramic Products connected with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry.

Dr. Simpson's researches were mainly in the field of mineral chemistry, mineralogy, and crystallography. He was an authority on clays and rare minerals and also on meteorites, which he assiduously collected and ex-

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aminated. He was the discoverer of a number of new minerals, including goongarrite, hydrothorite, pilbarite, picrocollite, tanteuxenite, maitlandite, manganilménite, and manganomossite. During 40 years of his professional career, he published over 100 papers and monographs on scientific subjects, and, in 1932 a book "A Key to Mineral Groups, Species, and Varieties" (Chapman & Hall). He achieved international repute with researches dealing with the genesis, constitution, alterations, and economic applications of minerals, and was particularly successful in elucidating the true constitutions of a number of groups of unusually complex composition, such as the euxenite-polycrase group, the rutile-tapiolite group, and the chloritoid group. He was the first to demonstrate the nature of the relationship existing between the densities of individual members of an isomorphous group and the composition of their mixed crystals, and to apply it to the practical evaluation of tantalum ores. In later years, he was awarded the W. B. Clarke Memorial Medal of the Royal Society of New South Wales, and the Kelvin Medal of the Royal Society of Western Australia.

During recent years Dr. Simpson was engaged in collating and bringing up to date the results of over 40 years of research on minerals, with the object of publishing a book on the mineralogy of Western Australia. This book, which was more than half completed at the time of his death, was to have been on the lines of that of the French mineralogist Lacroix on "Minerals of France and Its Colonies," only more comprehensive. It is pleasing to know that Dr. Simpson made arrangements in his will for the completion of the book, which will be of inestimable value to the State and to mineralogists. The work will be a splendid memorial to a great mineralogist.

Dr. Simpson married in 1904 Miss Muriel Griffiths, an Australian violinist, and they had three children—Mr. Brian Simpson, Mr. William Simpson, and Mrs. St. Aubyn Barrett-Lennard, who survive him. Some time after the death of his first wife he married Miss Ruth Blanch Alcock, who also survives him. He was keenly interested in art and music, and in Nature in all its manifestations, taking a prominent part in the activities of the Royal Society of Western Australia. In his earlier years he was an enthusiastic yachtsman and tennis player. An ardent disciple of precision and thoroughness, and a man of very high ideals, he brought into all his dealings a rare culture and knowledge in many branches of learning.

Although essentially a mineral chemist and a mineralogist, his grip of other branches and applications of chemistry, engendered by the possession of a really first-class brain, made it a great and unforgettable privilege to work under him. A great believer in making available the results of original work, he encouraged others to publish their results. Not a few will miss his example but they will retain lasting memories.