

FREDERICK WEBB HEADLEY.

It was with the deepest regret that the many friends of F. W. Headley heard of his unexpected death in a nursing home at Epsom on November 25th, 1919. As his oldest friend—our friendship dating from the year 1876, when we met on a reading party in North Wales—I welcome the opportunity of paying a heartfelt tribute to his memory ; and his death, when he was in the full vigour of body and mind, is a loss not only to his school friends but to a larger circle in the world outside.

Headley was a many-sided man, and no one ever illustrated with greater success the precept—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Son of the late Rev. H. Headley, of Brinsop Vicarage, near Hereford, he was born on April 10th, 1856. A scholar of Caius College, a First Class in the Classical Tripos, he was far more than a mere scholar. Appointed to a mastership at Haileybury College by the late Dr. Bradby in 1880 he at once proceeded to give proof of his versatility by taking a form on the modern side and teaching modern languages with marked success, though he had had no special training in French or German. He was devoted to literature, art and music, but the work with which he was specially identified was the study of natural science, and more particularly the life and flight of birds. He has left behind him at Haileybury lasting memorials in our well arranged Natural History Museum and our Natural History Society, many of whose members came under the spell of his inspiration and owed to him a real love of natural history. This would have been enough for most men, but it was not enough for Headley. Amid the calls of a busy life he found time to produce a series of books, which bear the impress of an acute and original mind : *The Structure of Birds*, 1895, *Problems of Evolution*, 1900, *Darwinism and Modern Socialism*, 1907, and *The Flight of Birds*, 1912.

But Headley was far more than an indoor ornithologist. As a field naturalist he had few equals. He knew every inch of the country for miles round Haileybury, and where every rare bird or flower was to be found ; in the holidays he went farther afield, but always with the same objects in view. Though he was a keen mountaineer and a member of the Alpine Club, the birds of Switzerland appealed to him more than the mountains ; he made expeditions to Algeria,

the south of Spain and the north of Germany, to islands in the Baltic and to Texel.

After thirty-five years of hard work he resigned his mastership in July 1914, when he hoped to realize the long deferred project of a lifetime, a tour of observation to the Soudan and other parts of the world, but it was not so to be. With the outbreak of war he at once volunteered his services and returned to Haileybury, resuming his work with the energy of a man of half his years. Throughout the war he had no holidays. His spare moments in term-time were given to work on the allotments of soldiers who were at the front, while his holidays were spent at a Y.M.C.A. hut, but even under these conditions he managed to finish the natural history part of *The Country Round Haileybury*, a book now ready for publication. There can be no doubt that he overtaxed his strength, and it is no wonder, that when he left Haileybury last July he felt war-weary. Writing to me in August, he said: "I feel very tired and I am advised to take a complete rest, but the best rest cure I can think of is a month at Bardsey Lighthouse, watching migration." This was the last time I heard from him, though a friend, with whom he was staying just before he started for Bardsey, told me he looked wretchedly ill; but he was so tough and vigorous that it came as a terrible shock when I heard that, after an operation for some internal trouble, he had passed painlessly away.

In Headley were happily combined striking gifts of body, mind and character, and he always used those gifts for the good of others. He was the personification of energy, unselfishness and devotion to duty. Of no man can it be more truly said that he "being dead yet speaketh"; and we cannot doubt that when he passed over the trumpet sounded for him on the other side.—M. V.