

## OBITUARY.

## Hugh Neville Dixon (1861-1944).

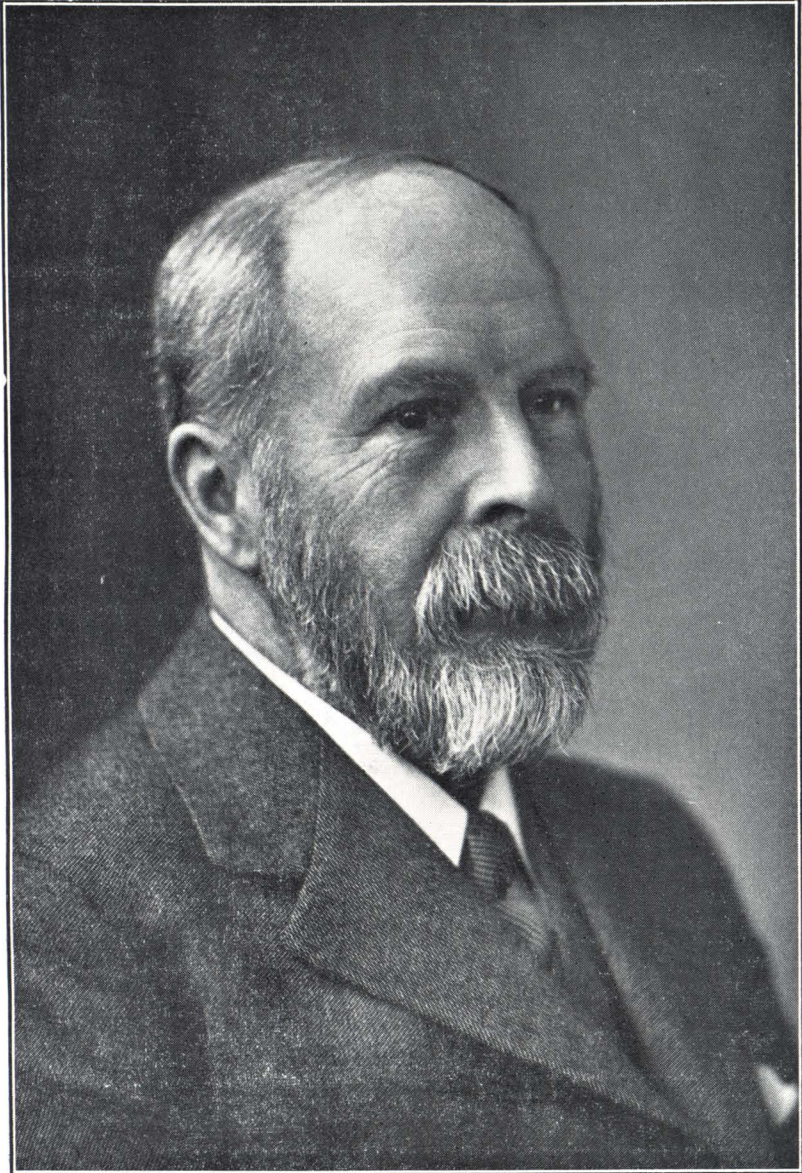
Hugh Neville Dixon, the eminent English bryologist, died on the 9th May, 1944, after a short illness. He was born at Wickham Bishop, Essex, on the 20th April, 1861. After completing his education at Christ's College, Cambridge, and obtaining a London Mastership of Arts, he joined the staff of a school for the deaf at Northampton, of which he subsequently assumed the direction and from which he retired in 1914. As a young man he became interested in the mosses, and during the whole of a long life he was devoted to their study. For very many years before his death he was recognised as one of the world's leading bryologists. He was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London in 1885, and held office on the Council and as Vice-President.

Dixon's published papers, dealing almost exclusively with the systematic and taxonomic treatment of mosses, number considerably more than 200, and include the publication of more than 1000 new species. From 1884 to 1943 these papers appeared almost continuously, and their scope, which at first was restricted to British and European mosses, was later extended to include those of the whole world. His most important work was *The Students' Handbook of British Mosses*, of which three editions have appeared, but so far as New Zealand students are concerned his outstanding publication was the *Studies in the Bryology of New Zealand*. It is doing no injustice to earlier workers in this branch of New Zealand botany to emphasise that their activities had often introduced confusion and overloaded the moss flora with a multitude of invalid species. Dixon, in the plenitude of his powers, with vast experience gained by the study of material from all parts of the world, and with a mind always receptive to fresh views, was eminently fitted to undertake this revision from a modern critical standpoint, and the result was a work of the highest excellence, indispensable to any student of the New Zealand mosses.

I never enjoyed the privilege of personal acquaintance with Dixon, but our correspondence extended without interruption for many years, throughout which I was ever impressed not only by the profundity of his knowledge, for that should go without saying, but by his kindness, modesty and humour. His help was always forthcoming, and was given not only willingly but promptly, doubtless often at the cost of personal inconvenience, for the demands on his time were numerous and exacting. I am sure that all his correspondents will have a sense of personal loss in addition to the deep regret that they will feel in being deprived of his invaluable help.

There was a marked artistic side to his nature, showing itself in a talent for writing verse and sketching. He was fond of outdoor life and was an indefatigable walker, an accomplished skater, and an enthusiastic mountaineer. Old age was not allowed to keep him from the mountains, and he climbed them almost to the end of his life. His British mosses were bequeathed to the Kew Herbarium, and his foreign collections to the British Museum (Natural History). For some of the above particulars I have availed myself of information contained in obituary notices appearing in *Nature* and *The Bryologist*,

G. O. K. SAINSBURY,



**The Late Hugh Neville Dixon.**