

drawn almost irresistibly to the work which ultimately engrossed him, and which became his life, his hobby and his religion. One can trace the broad ideal developing in his mind from the following words, spoken in 1910:—"Perhaps it is not too much to say that all that has gone before of human achievement pales into insignificance beside that of penetrating the obscurity which has hitherto enshrouded the most fundamental things of which we know, life and growth and death. We are led to conclude that the processes which underlie death are essentially different from those which determine growth and the attainment of maturity. Since they are so different it is at least possible that we may one day be in a position to arrest the one, while leaving unaffected the other, to prevent decay and death while maintaining the normal processes of mature life."

At first gradually and then wholeheartedly he attacked the tremendous problem of growth and senescence. Realising the nature of the task before him, he laid in his first stock of white mice in 1914 and prepared his long range plan of attack. He carried this major problem (plus the white mice) with him to Toronto, where he spent the year 1918, and then to Adelaide where he was appointed professor of physiology and biochemistry in the following year. Despite the confidence which he placed in his assistants he always had a dread of a break in the continuity of his work with the necessity of starting afresh, and this prevented him from taking the long holiday which latterly he really needed. Of the detailed results of this work, some have been collected in his book, "The Chemical Basis of Growth and Senescence," and the more recent appear in the various journals. Quite recently he expressed the view that his work was reaching a critical stage, and that given two more years he would produce something "really worth while." But at the very height of his activities he was taken from us.

Altogether Robertson made upwards of 150 contributions to science. Apart from the major problems of the proteins, and growth and senescence, he worked on all sorts of physiological and biological questions. Of these perhaps his studies on the central nervous system, and on the allelocatalytic effect, and his work on tethelin and cholesterol (part of his growth studies) and his early preparation and use of insulin are outstanding. His philosophic outlook may be judged from the titles of some other of his contributions, "The Mechanistic Origin of Finalism," "Consciousness and the Sense of Time," "The Process of Forgetting," and so forth.

In 1927 he was invited to form the division of animal nutrition of the Commonwealth Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. He took

his growth studies with him, and soon showed the breadth of his outlook. Concentrating particularly on wool production, he laid down a series of field stations throughout Australia, and co-ordinated laboratory and field practice in a characteristically thorough and scientific manner. His investigations included the value of a supplementary protein diet in drought-stricken areas, the value of a cystine high diet in the quality and the quantity of wool, the causes and the treatment of "break" in wool, the use of phosphates as a supplementary diet in phosphate-deficient country. Already results of striking value have been obtained, and at Meteor Downs and Orion Downs in Queensland, the practice of supplementary feeding has been extended to the whole of the flocks, numbering 80,000 sheep. Amongst those associated with him in this work there were expectations of developments of tremendous importance. Although the work has been sadly interrupted by his death, his plans for the future had been so carefully prepared and so elaborately committed to paper, that one may hope that some at least of the results will be brought to fruition.

It was not only in the realms of science that Robertson's greatness lay. His gentleness of character, his loyalty to his ideals and to his friends, his kindly tolerance, and his infinite patience, endeared him to everyone with whom he came in contact. Though on occasion his scientific condemnation was forceful and severe, I have never heard him utter, under any circumstances, an unkindly personal sentiment against anyone. He was one of those rare characters who took his staff into his confidence; let them know what he was doing, and gave them an intimate knowledge of the problems in hand. Moreover, by seeking the virtues in each of his assistants he brought out the best from within them and obtained their confidence and their love. Each member of his staff looked upon him not only as a leader but as a friend.

His capacity for work was amazing. His "Principals of Biochemistry," in itself quite an undertaking, was written in the evenings, generally starting about 9 p.m. Although he did not attempt to keep up this pace all his life, his stern devotion to work undoubtedly led, both directly and indirectly, to his untimely death. Twelve months ago, he spent his rare and brief vacation at the Murray mouth, and whiled away the time by taking the pH of the waters over the estuary in order to verify a theory which he had formulated. His last illness was brought on by attendance at his laboratory when he should have been in bed.

Withal he preserved a well balanced mind. He was wise in council; an appreciative student of art and literature and music, and a great lover of children. When Svante Arrhenius was told