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In Memoriam.

JOHN COOPER FORSTER.

JOHN COOPER FORSTER was born in Mount Street, Lambeth, November 13th, 1823, both his father and grandfather having been in large general practice there. His father gave up the practice and retired to Notting Hill in 1851, and died, aged seventy-five, in 1870. It is not uninteresting to note that the father was, quite up to seventy, a man of very great activity and go, ever on the move like a boy, until one Sunday he caught a chill while visiting a friend's grave at Kensal Green, where sixteen years later his son was to lie, and sank quickly like his son. Both father and son now lie together there. Mr. Forster's home stood at the angle of meeting of the Westminster Bridge Road and the Kennington Road, and during his early life a large garden ran out behind, occupying a space now built over with small houses. From the existence of this garden, the interest which he took in its well doing, in fact from his acting as head gardener to his father, sprang up that fondness for flowers, and later on for ferns, especially the rarer and more delicate kinds, which ultimately developed into that exquisite fernery opening out of the consulting room at 29, Upper Grosvenor Street, so well known to all who were much in that house.

After being at King's College School, under the headmastership of Dr. Major, Forster left, when eighteen,

for Guy's in 1841. During his student days he was captain of the Guy's Hospital Boat Club, at that time in a very flourishing state, and the genial kindness which he showed in helping the younger hands, is still remembered by some old Guy's men, whose life-long friendship began in this way. One of these, Dr. Prance, of Hampstead, informs the writer that at that time he often heard Cooper Forster spoken of as the best amateur trainer on the Thames. In 1844 Mr. Forster became M.R.C.S., and shortly after was dresser to Mr. Aston Key. In 1847 he took the London M.B., obtaining the second place, with the gold medal in surgery, and in 1849 became F.R.C.S. by examination. Between 1844 and 1850, whilst waiting for an appointment at Guy's, he had the post of surgeon to the surgery, dispensary, and some years later, the same appointment to the Royal Hospital for Women and Children in the Waterloo Bridge Road, and was one of the very first to administer anæsthetics at Guy's.

In 1850 Mr. Forster was appointed Demonstrator of Anatomy at Guy's, and in the same year he married. At this time he was living at 11, Wellington Street, the back of the house looking on to St. Saviour's Church, and the front into the large square of St. Thomas's Hospital. In 1861 these, for the Borough, not unpleasant surroundings were cut up by the South Eastern Railway taking the house in order to span the road with their present bridge in the extension of their line from London Bridge to Cannon Street. The moving of Mr. and Mrs. Cooper Forster into No. 10, St. Thomas's Street, in 1864, was sadly overclouded by the death of two children from diphtheria, the father operating on one case himself. And it may be noted here that Mr. Forster was one of the very few surgeons who had a successful case of tracheotomy for croup in a child under twelve months, he having operated with a good result at Norwood on a child ten months old. In 1855 Mr. Forster became assistant surgeon at Guy's, and four years later a relative, who had always been greatly attached to him, left him at her death a house at Lewisham and a carriage and pair, which he drove from that time onwards. These easier circumstances enabled him now to exercise that hospitality towards students and others which ever afterwards gave him so much pleasure. During the two years in which he retained

possession of the Lewisham house began the many drives down to Greenwich to dinner (afterwards varied by visits to Richmond), which continued till suburban tramways made driving odious.

In 1870, after fifteen years service as assistant surgeon, Mr. Forster became full surgeon by the resignation of Mr. Cock, an appointment which he held up to 1880. This is scarcely the time nor are *in memoriam* pages a place in which to speak much of the closing of this appointment and with it the ending of Mr. Cooper Forster's connection with Guy's, a tie which, strengthened by the links of forty years, he thought due to his position and standing to sever in 1880. It will suffice to say that Mr. Forster, considering that the course taken by the authorities with regard to the *quæstio vexata* of that day was likely to be followed by pernicious results to the hospital and school, that sufficient attention was not paid to the earnestly expressed wish of the staff, and far too little weight attached to the opinions of men who had spent all the best years of a lifetime at the hospital, resigned his appointment as senior surgeon in the autumn of 1880.

As a proof of their regard, and in gratitude for his ever ready kindness, over 400 Guy's men at once subscribed to a testimonial to Mr. Forster, which took the form of a piece of silver plate. At the same time a similar testimonial was presented to Dr. Habershon, who, as senior physician, resigned at the same time.

From this time onwards Mr. Forster was able to give himself up to the interests and pursuits which were so congenial to him. While he attended with the utmost regularity to his work at the College of Surgeons he was now able to give up more time to the fishing which from his boyhood he had loved so well, and which pursuit had now largely replaced his former exercise of rowing, and also to showing even more frequently than before that genial hospitality in which he so excelled. He increasingly allowed private practice to go by, now only seeing patients with a few old and long attached friends. At the close of his presidency of the College of Surgeons in July, 1885, he definitely retired, as he always said that he would; his door-plate, in token of this, being removed the day on which his year of office terminated. Towards the close of that same year it was decided that his family and he should

carry out an often talked of project, to winter in the Riviera. Mr. Cooper Forster, much as he enjoyed travelling in Great Britain, disliked going abroad ; but he yielded now for the benefit of his wife's health, and with the hope that among the numerous English colonies scattered along that shore of the Mediterranean he might find, if not friends and acquaintances, at least something closely approaching to those English uscs and customs which had become so necessary to him at sixty-two. One evening of that winter the writer, on coming home, found that Mr. Forster had called, as was his wont, when about to dine at the Albion with the Council of the College of Surgeons' Club. In talking of the coming trip he said, " I do not suppose I shall enjoy it but my wife will, and it is for her sake I am going." Whilst he thus, as often, showed his unselfishness, Mrs. Forster was rejoicing to get him away to places where she thought that her husband would not over-tire himself, nor expose himself to the cold and wet which appeared to her so hazardous in his winter fishing expeditions.

It is probable that the close of his life, which was to set in with such apparently grievous suddenness, two months later, was already casting shadows before it. During all the latter half of 1885 Mr. Forster had mentioned, off and on, pain in the upper part of the left arm ; he would not allow this to be due to any strain in fishing, as he used the rod with both hands equally ; but once or twice he said that if he could trace blood-poisoning to any cause, he should think he had got it. During the end of 1885, when his wife and family were at Bournemouth, Mrs. Forster first became uneasy owing to the languor and depression then first noticed as so unusual in her husband, and attributed this to his having done too much for his strength during the last twelve months. For after devoting himself most closely to his work as President of the College of Surgeons, he would get up between five and six on Saturday morning, go down by the earliest train into Hampshire, to Horsebridge or Christchurch, fishing for pike in the winter, and for trout in spring and summer, returning to town only just in time to begin his week's work on Monday again.

Another source of disquiet and anxiety was a most unusual eruption, which, appearing first in January, 1886, remained to the end ; about the nature of this even Mr. Hutchinson was

uncertain, and the relation of this eruption to Mr. Forster's death was one of the points which will always remain obscure. He left for Cannes January 21st, 1885, and for the first two or three weeks all seemed well save for the fact that the eruption slowly increased. Mr. Forster, during the time that he could enjoy it, was greatly delighted with the scenery, and the wealth of flowers and plants. Little as he had enjoyed previous trips, slight though had been the gratification which even Switzerland or the Moselle had given him, there was much in this well favoured spot which should give him real enjoyment. Close along the coast line his eyes would rest on luxuriant, in places almost tropical, vegetation, oranges and lemons, cultivated here for their blossoms, and not, as farther eastward in the Mediterranean, as at Malta, for their fruit, figs and vines, oleanders, azaleas, and camellias in full blossom in the open air. Farther inland he saw the spurs and slopes which the maritime Alps and Apennines send down, clad at their feet with olive plantations, and, farther up, with oaks and pines, these last having been here in prehistoric times, before Asia had sent over her characteristic fruits.

While at Cannes, Mr. Forster amused and gratified two or three possessors of gardens by the enthusiastic pleasure which he showed. This gleam of brightness was unhappily the last instance of his lifelong capacity for enjoying Nature. After about three weeks at Cannes appetite began to fail, and when the next move was made on to Nice, this symptom increased with others equally unusual, depression of spirits and failing bodily power. But save for these there was nothing to take heed of, neither fever, nor pain, nor sickness. To the last the hope was cherished that foreign ways and foreign cooking lay at the root of the evil, and with characteristic cheerfulness Mr. Forster himself made light of his condition, saying, "I shall go home, have some good rump steak and port wine, and in two days I shall be at my fishing." Before turning his face towards England his last thought was to secure fitting rooms for his wife and daughter at St. Remo. This done, he started homewards. There is unhappily no doubt that this last journey was most disastrous. The weather was bitterly cold, the train was crowded, and during all the time Mr. Forster took little more than soda-water. On his arrival at Grosvenor Street

he told his old servant Jordan, who was shocked at the exhausted, haggard, strengthless appearance of his master, that he had only come home to die. A long sleep, so long as to alarm the servants, caused some slight regain of strength, and Mr. Forster sent off a reassuring telegram to his wife. But this was not to last. In spite of unremitting attention on the part of Dr. Habershon and Dr. Wilks, every attempt to help was met by actual distaste for and inability to take food. This was accompanied by rapid and ominous failure of strength and prostration, deepening into that of death, which took place early on the morning of the 2nd of March.

It still remains obscure as to what really killed Mr. Forster. At the time those around him consulted whether it was typhoid fever, or subacute gastritis brought on by unpalatable food and unwelcome customs in a foreign land, these producing emaciation, and thus weakness, which at last could not be stayed. Was it obscure blood-poisoning? or, lastly, was the eruption which had come out three months before his death all the time a shadow which the coming event was casting on before it? The autopsy seemed to refute the idea of typhoid fever. The second view that the fatal illness was due to want of accustomed food, and to the annoyance of foreign living, to which things Mr. Forster was no doubt peculiarly sensitive, was held by Dr. Wilks. Against it is the fact that evidence of languor and failure of strength had appeared before Mr. Forster left England. The idea of blood-poisoning arose from the fact that has been already mentioned, that during all the latter part of 1885 Mr. Forster complained of pain in the upper part of the left arm, tenderness being present here also, but no enlargement of the bone. Unfortunately this point was not cleared up, as the attention of those who made the examination was not directed to it.

The fourth view, that the gradually increasing and fatal weakness was brought about by a constitutional condition accompanying an eruption allied to lichen planus was held by Mr. Hutchinson, and it will not be inappropriate in pages like these to quote the following most interesting remarks by him in the '*British Medical Journal*,' March 13, 1886. They are a model of lucid reasoning from comparatively few data in a case of great obscurity.

“ On Thursday, February 25th, I called and saw Mr. Forster in bed, Dr. Wilks having seen him before I did, on the same morning. He told me that he had an eruption. He took off his nightshirt, and showed me an eruption of brown papules on his chest and back. They were from the size of half peas to that of sixpences, slightly raised and well margined. Some of them were rather smooth in the middle, but none actually glossy. One on the right shoulder was larger than the rest, as big as a halfpenny, and considerably raised in the centre. Most of them were rather thicker in the middle than at the margins, and shelved down gradually. He had few or none on the abdomen or limbs. He told me that the eruption had first been noticed on his chest before he left home for Cannes, on January 21st. This would have been about six weeks ago. He said that while at Cannes and Nice, he had been losing flesh and strength, had had a poor appetite, and had been ‘dreadfully constipated.’ He had travelled home alone, and I understood that his motive was to get advice as to his eruption, about which he was very anxious. He said that he had suffered much in his journey home, and had not been able to take any food. He looked very ill, but was perfectly clear in his mind. He left his bed for my inspection of the eruption. I examined his throat, and found no sores on the tonsils, but was struck with the red colour of all parts of his mouth, tongue, cheeks, palate, and fauces. I thought that his mouth must feel sore, but he assured me that it did not. It was not at this time dry, but simply very red. The light was very bad—that of a foggy afternoon—with a chamber candle. I suggested that his eruption looked a little like *lichen planus*. To this he replied that he had felt sure that I should call it ‘*lichen planus*.’ It will be observed by dermatologists that it did not closely conform to that disorder. I asked him if he had worn any new vests, and he told me that he had, and that when the papules were first noticed he thought they must be due to the irritation of his vest, and had it changed. The spots, however, did not disappear, but continued to come out. His pulse was then 110, at which he expressed surprise, and said it had never before been more than 80 ; and that he had ‘had neither rigor nor fever, but only felt desperately weak.’ I advised him that as no diagnosis could

be made he had better do nothing but keep quiet, and take light food. He had had some soup, but said that he had not the least appetite. I was to see him again by better daylight next morning.

“On Friday morning it was a dense fog and I deferred my visit till the afternoon. On calling then it was still very dark, and I arranged to meet Dr. Wilks next morning and did not go upstairs.

“On Saturday morning I met Dr. Wilks and Dr. Habershon. They had just been in his room, and as they suspected fever, and as it seemed desirable to let our patient rest as much as possible, we agreed that I should not trouble him by further examination then, but that we should all meet on the next morning.

“On Sunday morning Sir James Paget was kind enough to join Dr. Wilks and Dr. Habershon and myself in our consultation.

“Mr. Forster was looking much worse than when I had seen him on Thursday afternoon. He was much more prostrate, and his tongue and mouth were so dry that he could scarcely speak so as to be understood, yet he was perfectly himself and quite acute in his remarks. The eruption on his chest and back was less conspicuous, but essentially the same as on Thursday. Some of the smaller spots on the upper part of the abdomen had been suspected as those of typhoid fever, but there was really no definite distinction between them and others on the chest of the kind already described. He had been sick once or twice. He was too ill for us to make any very minute inspection of the skin. He complained of pain in the left arm, which appeared to be sensitive to the slightest pressure on the humerus just about the insertion of the deltoid; there was nothing positive. He flinched whenever the bone was pressed, but no enlargement of it could be distinguished. We did not examine it much on account of his great debility. His mouth was everywhere quite dry, and sticky mucus hung about the pillars of the fauces. We all thought him very ill and likely to die, but there was no reason to expect such a rapid termination as that which followed. His intellect remained quite clear. His temperature was never (excepting once when it rose to 103°) more than 102° ; his pulse often not 100. His tongue remained dry.

“On Monday morning he looked more depressed, and the unfavorable prognosis which we had all formed on Sunday was strengthened. At the evening visit he was clearly sinking. He died about four the next morning.

“The post-mortem was chiefly of interest in that it quite put aside the suspicion as to typhoid fever. The small intestines were most carefully examined and there was no trace of disease. The most conspicuous condition found was acute hæmorrhagic congestion of both kidneys. There was some serous fluid in both pleural cavities, and congestion of the lower and posterior parts of the lungs. These conditions had probably developed during the last few hours of life. No jaundice had been noticed during life, but there was at the necropsy yellow staining of all viscera, which suggested its commencement. The heart was healthy.

“I am sorry that I cannot give a more exact account of the eruption than I have done. My first inspection of it was by candle-light in a fog, and as I expected to have other opportunities I did not keep him long uncovered. The spots were certainly not the smooth glossy ones of lichen planus, nor did they observe the rule as to uniformity of size.

“Whilst away Mr. Forster failed in appetite and strength, used to complain of being weary, and was occasionally sick. That he was not very ill even when he started on his return journey may be assumed from the fact that he elected to travel alone. His reason for hurrying home was, as I understood him, not that he felt very ill but that he was anxious about his eruption, and did not wish to consult anybody abroad.

“That his journey caused him great harm there can be no doubt. It was performed in extreme discomfort. He was unable to take food or to sleep, and the weather was very cold. When he reached his home he looked like “a man stricken for death,” and could only just manage to get upstairs.

“The one only objective symptom up to this date had been the eruption on his chest and back. This had begun before he left England but had increased during his stay at Cannes. I cannot escape the conviction that the eruption was an important part of his illness. It was a very peculiar one. It

was almost limited to his chest and shoulders. I think there was none on his lower extremities, and very few and very small spots on his abdomen. It had developed slowly, and there had been no glandular swellings and no sore-throat.

“Next to the rash the most conspicuous local condition was the red and dry mouth. His tongue (on Sunday) did not show, as is often seen, a dry streak in the middle, but was as dry as it could possibly be in every part, rough and red. Yet he would not admit that his mouth was sore. His temperature was never very high (102°). His pulse did not quicken or fail in power at first, at all in keeping with his appearance of prostration. It was only within twelve hours of death that his pulse materially failed. My impression is that the case is one in which a patient, in whom a condition allied to lichen planus was developing, was subjected to cold and fatigue in a long journey, with the result of inducing local congestions, and of greatly intensifying the constitutional disturbance which now and then attends that disease. Hebra at first taught that lichen ruber was always fatal, and only changed his opinion when he found the good results which followed the use of arsenic. Death, however, usually occurred after an illness of some months or a year, and after the skin had become very extensively involved. Some cases of pemphigus are attended, from the first, by great prostration, and many would end speedily in death were it not for arsenic. In such, however, the extent of skin affected is always very much greater than it was in Mr. Forster’s case. The redness and dryness of the mouth suggested that acute stomatitis might be about to develop, and that the case might be allied to certain rare affections, in which a very sore mouth is coincident with a skin-eruption, and there is a definite tendency to death from prostration.

“If it be suggested that some poison (fever or other) was received during his stay in France, it must be replied that the eruption was undoubtedly present before he left home.

“As to the real cause of acute pemphigus or of lichen planus, we know nothing. That they probably concern the nervous system rather than the blood, may be inferred from the manner in which arsenic cures them.

“Of cases in which a sore mouth was coincident with a skin

eruption, and either ended fatally or threatened to do so, I have seen five or six examples. Four were in men about Mr. Forster's age, and two of these died at the end of five months. The eruption on the skin in these was united, being like pemphigus in part, and in part papular, with a tendency to papillary growths. In another case (which recovered) only a few papules showed themselves on the backs of the hands. If Mr. Forster's case be one of this class, it is to be noted that the eruption preceded the stomatitis, and that both were insignificant in comparison with the constitutional depression. Indeed, it cannot be said that Mr. Forster ever had stomatitis; his mouth was simply congested and dry.

"That the eruption was in some connection with the constitutional disturbance, is a conclusion favoured by the fact of his stay at Cannes. As early as February 4th he had complained of weakness after a walk, and had vomited, and from this date he had lost flesh and strength. This eruption had begun to show itself long before this, and was increasing as his loss of health increased."

The chief events of Mr. Forster's life having been spoken of an attempt will be made, however imperfectly, to sketch what manner of man he was as a surgeon, and as a lover of Nature, and as a host, for it was in these capacities that he will be valued and remembered with affectionate gratitude by many generations of Guy's men; it was this combination of a power to work himself and of making others work, a capacity of keenly enjoying nature whether on the top of a coach, in his boat, or by Hampshire trout streams, together with a delight as keen in aiding others to enjoy themselves, that marked the man.

The writer will not be accused of any want of respect to the dead if he expresses his belief that eminent as Mr. Forster was in the truest and most literal sense of the word, striking in his personal gifts, well known for the use he made of his large share of this world's goods, he would have been still more eminent as a surgeon if the stream of his life, as it ran on, had not been made to flow along such pleasant lines.

Few, who only knew him in later days, realised how hard Mr. Forster had worked in his earlier years. Tracing

his course on from student days we have seen him taking the gold medal in surgery at his M.B., Demonstrator of Anatomy at Guy's in 1850, and Assistant Surgeon in 1855. In these earlier years, before 1859, when the path of his life had not yet been made so smooth, he gave many instances of his interest and zeal for his work. In 1848 he took advantage of the disturbances at Paris to go there and study gun-shot wounds; and during his senior student days at Guy's found time to work at the old 'Dreadnought' as well. When Mr. Forster married in 1850 he took advantage of his wedding trip to visit Dublin in order to see the practice of Sir W. Wilde, the celebrated aurist, a specialty to which at that time Mr. Forster was paying a good deal of attention, and attracted there also by the fame of the Irish school, especially illustrious at that time with workers on aneurysm, a subject to which Dr. Bellingham's book, published three years before, was then drawing so much attention. Further instance of like activity was shown by a visit which Mr. Forster paid to Aberdeen in 1867 in order to make himself personally acquainted with the method of acupressure as practised by Prof. Pirrie, and on which subject he published papers in our 'Reports' for 1867 and 1868. As is well known, acupressure soon gave place to torsion and to the new ligatures which antiseptic surgery, now just rising on the horizon, was to introduce while it rendered safer the older ones. Mr. Forster was quick to perceive the advantages of torsion over the uncertainty and other objections of acupressure; and about this time he served on a committee appointed by the council of the Clinical Society to investigate the relative advantages of the two methods. This committee never issued a report owing to the untimely death of Mr. Brnee, but Mr. Forster, at the close of 1869, brought his own experience before the Society in one of the very earliest papers published on the subject ('Clin. Soc. Trans.,' vol. iii, 55).

In 1858 Mr. Cooper Forster, at the suggestion of Dr. Habershon, performed gastrostomy, an operation which, thus introduced into English surgery at Guy's Hospital, has been within the same walls rendered so much safer by Mr. Howse's mode of operating in two stages. In the case above-mentioned the man was forty-seven, and suffering from chronic

disease of the apex of the right lung in addition to œsophageal cancer. The operation gave great relief to the pangs of starvation, but the patient sank from exhaustion. At the autopsy ('Guy's Hosp. Rep.,' 1858) "the peritoneum was healthy; no inflammation, effusion of lymph and serum, or diminution of its normal smoothness could be detected." We of a later generation of surgeons, who have Mr. Howse's important improvement to make use of, with all the advantages of antiseptic surgery to help us, and able in hosts of publications to reap the fruits of foreign workers, may well admire the way in which Mr. Forster nine and twenty years ago took up this new operation, there being, as he said, "no experience in British surgery to guide me."

These instances of Cooper Forster's boldness and energy in surgery may be not unfitly alluded to in 1887, and in these pages, as there was latterly always a mistaken tendency, especially amongst superficial observers, to look upon him as one who, owing to his affluent circumstances, cared comparatively little for his profession.

Up to 1859, when his circumstances first became easy, numerous papers will be found scattered through the journals, and regularly through the pages of the Pathological Society, by Mr. Forster. The appointment of full surgeon at Guy's was taken up by him with much fresh zest and energy. Proof of the interest which he took in his ward work is given in the 'Reports of Surgical Cases,' which he published for several consecutive years in these 'Reports.' These were taken not in the ordinary way by the surgical ward clerks but by special reporters, of whom Mr. Rendle and Dr. Goodhart were amongst the first. In his wards Mr. Forster's work was characterised by unfailing punctuality and regularity in attendance. His emphatic way of driving home points of practical importance, his habit of enforcing attention to matters which he considered essential to the well-being of his patients, his cheery contempt for mere theories and crude practices often based upon them, will still be fresh in the minds of many. As during the session Mr. Forster never allowed anything to come between him and his hospital cases, so he was vigilant in keeping others up to their work. No better proof of this can be given than the fact that the appointment to him

was always anxiously sought after. One of his former dressers, my old friend George A. Wright, of Manchester, writes thus of his old surgeon: "In his work in the wards promptitude and decision were perhaps Mr. Forster's chief characteristics. Quick in forming an opinion and in deciding upon a line of treatment, impatient of 'fads,' but always ready to allow his dressers to try any reasonable new methods, he was essentially a practical surgeon. Make up your mind quickly and do it at once, seemed his instinct. Yet with this he was so entirely free from anything like roughness, so kindly and so generous to all alike, that those who worked under him felt not only admiration but personal affection for their surgeon."

Mr. Forster's clinical lectures were noted for their decisiveness, their terseness, and abounding common sense, brought home even to the most careless of listeners by the emphatic delivery and the presence of him who was speaking.

Amongst the operations which Mr. Forster seemed to enjoy especially were lithotomy (with a Key's staff) on a little child, lithotomy, a Syme's amputation, and, with his fine physique, the refracture of a badly-set femur in a sailor, with an angular displacement, which recalled the surgery of the fore-castle in the Bay of Biscay, and the combined efforts of boat-swain and carpenter, with, perhaps, the captain or chief officer as consultant.

The same regularity and punctuality of work marked Mr. Forster as President of the College of Surgeons. He did not miss one lecture, committee, or council meeting throughout his year of office, which was one of considerable anxiety and hard work. It was during his presidency that the combined examining scheme of the two colleges came into force, Mr. Forster having previously resigned his examinership in surgery (a post in which he took great interest) in order that he might be qualified to be one of the three first members of the "Committee of Management" for the perfecting of the above scheme.

Turning from his work to his recreations, the keen enjoyment which Mr. Forster took in out-door life and the earnestness with which he threw himself into his favourite pursuits were very characteristic of the man. For some time after moving

to Grosvenor Street he used frequently, as June or July came round, to go out on the top of one of the coaches starting from Hatchett's and running down to Brighton or Oxford, enjoy the day's ride immensely. Kew Gardens were also an unfailing source of delight and interest, and received frequent visits.

Throughout the greater part of his life rowing and fishing were his favourite pursuits. To very few Englishmen were their native waters known anything like so well as to Cooper Forster. Wherever a boat could go, on canals as well as rivers, he had made exploring journeys. His knowledge of the Thames, even to minute details, was something simply marvellous. Not only the distance between locks, the best spots for pulling up, how most quickly to reach the railway, were all perfectly familiar to him, but it is no exaggeration to say that at one time the banks of the river, both Upper and Lower Thames, were as well known to him as the chief streets through which he passed in London. Proof of this was given by the way in which he would row from Oxford to Staines without a coxswain. He usually rowed stroke, but whether stroke or bow, always kept the boat's course himself, and doing this it was the rarest thing to see him turn his head round, carrying in his mind as he did a knowledge of what was coming from what he saw of the banks before him as the boat glided by. Whether alone, whether in storm or sunshine, whether lingering round some favourite ait, or rowing hard to catch the train, no form was ever more familiar to frequenters of the river and its banks than his. In the early summer he was very fond of asking for "an easy," that he might watch and enjoy, in the freshness of their June beauty, those water-plants which are never seen to such advantage as on the banks of the Thames. As his boat glided gently on under the overhanging trees in their fresh glory of green, with the water lapping against the bows, with sunshine on the ripples—amidst, in a word, those sights and sounds which when combined come as near to the perfection of deliciousness as anything in this life—Cooper Forster would point out, showing how well he had used his eyes, the great willow-herb or *epilobium*, standing, with the purple loose-strife, in close companionship with the *Spiræa* or meadowsweet, while yet nearer to the

water's edge, clustered in colonies of noble growth, the tussilago, great water dock, and the burdock, scarcely to be known here as the same plant as when, on poor chalky soil above the river, it is a pest to Berkshire farmers. Anyone seeing the perfect trim in which his boat was kept, his familiarity with every detail of water trips, his enjoyment in giving directions as he piloted his boat in and out of a crowded lock, might have thought how surely Cooper Forster would have distinguished himself on other waters and under different skies, if circumstances had led him to join the navy.

He was pleasantly contemptuous over the small knowledge of managing boats which otherwise good oars often possessed. "You Oxford and Cambridge men," he would say, with his cheery smile, "know how to row, but you don't know a little bit of the work of watermen." This was naturally true of men who never pushed off from Salter's or Searle's yards, or passed in a racing eight through Iffley or Baitsbite locks, without plenty of hands to help. Few things seemed to give Cooper Forster more pleasure, when he was out with any member of the old Universities, than to assume fatigue as the boat approached a lock, and handing his companion the hitcher, tell him to take the boat through, while from the cushions in the stern he watched with a vigilant eye to see how his junior could "fend" for himself, woe betiding him if any of the paint with which the randan was always spick and span was damaged in the transit.

His activity was most remarkable, and was far from giving presage of such an untimely end. If a lock-keeper was slow in answering that well-known hail, Mr. Forster was soon hard at work at the winches himself. On one occasion, when boating on the Kennet and Avon canal, which joins the Thames to the Severn and other rivers of the west, the crowbar by which the hatches were raised previous to emptying or filling the lock was accidentally dropped into the water. Mr. Forster promptly ordered all hands to bathe, and it was only after a good deal of trouble and diving in the pool below that the precious metal was recovered. On one of his later visits to the Upper Thames, while between Mapledurham Lock and the spot where "The Roebuck" nestles above the railway cutting, a sharp shower came on and the boat was pushed

under cover of the limes which there hang over the water's edge. While the occupants thus lay *perdu*, a cart with milk cans was brought across a meadow down to the opposite bank, and several cans containing milk were deliberately filled up with Thames water. Mr. Forster promptly had the boat pushed out into the stream, and rebuked the men, who beat a confused and somewhat loutish retreat, otherwise quite unabashed. On getting down to Reading and announcing this to the landlord of the hotel, and advising him to beware as to how he bought his milk, Mr. Forster was met by one or two inquiries as to where the transaction had taken place, and by the naïve remark, "I think that milk is going to London."

In his earlier years Mr. Forster not unfrequently took houses near the Thames. On one of these occasions, while at Twickenham, he was much annoyed by intruders, who not only moored their boats on his garden bank, but had the impudence to land and lie on the turf. One Sunday, coming back from church, he found that two unmitigated 'Arries had moored their boat, and that one was lolling on the lawn. Striding down upon them, he ordered them off, and was met by insolent defiance and abuse. The intruders little knew their man; Cooper Forster promptly tumbled the saunterers back into the boat, and, stooping down, pushed them off into midstream, leaving these two sons of Belial to take their usual refuge in baffled blasphemy.

It was, perhaps, as a host that Mr. Forster will be most affectionately remembered, and longest missed by many. Whether it was on boating trips, whether in his own corner at the Junior Athenæum Club, or in older days at the "Ship" at Greenwich, he was as a host quite unsurpassed, and had, probably, very few rivals in his ever young capacity for enjoyment, and in his joyousness in making others gathered round him happy.

If, as was the case, he liked, with his ample income, pleasant things, he liked to the full as much that others should enjoy them too. One of his chief enjoyments was to invite his dressers to dinner, in the winter to Grosvenor Street, in the summer to the "Ship" at Greenwich or the "Star and Garter" at Richmond. It would, indeed, be difficult to say whether host or guests most enjoyed this most pleasant outing.

Many will remember his figure in the balcony at Greenwich watching for the steamer by which his guests would come down from the hospital, then the dinner, of which no more need be said than that it was of Cooper Forster's own most careful ordering, of which the most pleasing feature and the one longest cherished afterwards by those who cared for him was the genial, cheery host, the life and soul of the party, entering into the enjoyment of the thing as freshly and heartily as any of his guests. When, after dinner, a move was made outside, it was only to exchange one enjoyment for another, as the shades of evening gradually deepened into night over the broad river, with the Hospital in the bend below, and the Park rising up with its trees to the Observatory above, while the brown-sailed lighters slipped by like ghosts amidst a silence only broken by some passing steamer, or the clinking of a winch as a ship going down on the top of the tide hove her anchor short.

Truly his were *epulæ lautæ*, with his liberal provision, his thoughtfulness for the happiness of his guests, his earnest desire that everyone should get the full enjoyment of the hour, and that nothing that could give pleasure should be lacking.

The interval since Mr. Cooper Forster's death is too short, and these are scarcely the pages for an impartial notice of Mr. Forster's character.

With reference to the matter alluded to earlier in this notice, and with which his name in 1880 was much coupled, it must be remembered that he was warmly devoted to his hospital, and that, forming as he did a link between older and more modern Guy's, it is not a matter of wonder, still less of blame, if he failed to find himself able to adapt himself to those circumstances with which, with unexpected suddenness, set in the most important crisis through which the hospital has passed.

Perhaps he was somewhat hasty in forming his decision, and too ready to adopt or cast aside conclusions on insufficient evidence, perhaps a little too prone to take offence at any difference in opinion or fancied slight.

But we will prefer to remember—what many a spot at Guy's will long recall—that genial and cheery voice, that fine

physique and noble presence, and that head and face which might well have lived in marble, recalling Priam's words :

ὦς μοι καὶ τόνδ' ἄνδρα πελώριον ἐξονομήνης,
Ὅστις ὅδ' ἐστὶν Ἀχαιοὺς ἀνὴρ ἥνς τε μέγας τε.
Καλὸν δ' οὔτ' ἐγὼν οὔπ' ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,
Οὐδ' οὔτ' ἔγωγε γεραίρον. Βασιλῆϊ γὰρ ἀνδρὶ ἔοικε.

And those who knew most of his warm-heartedness as a friend, his kindly liberal nature, and his unfailing interest in his juniors, will also know best how well it would be for this world, if all those whose circumstances were as easy were as keen to find pleasure in the enjoyment of others, and as open-handed cheerful helpers, as JOHN COOPER FORSTER.

W. H. A. JACOBSON.

