

THE ASYLUM CHAPLAIN'S COLUMN.

As a "Chaplain's Column" has just been introduced into the Journal, the time and place seem appropriate for a short notice of the life of a distinguished man who was chaplain of a county asylum for more than thirty years.

The Rev. Henry Hugh Higgins, who was born in 1814, and died on July 2nd, 1893, was appointed chaplain to the Rainhill Asylum in 1853, and held the office till 1886, when he resigned on account of failing health.

In 1882 he suddenly broke down during morning service, and a careful medical examination revealed the existence of organic heart disease, accompanied with a certain amount of aphasia. As Mr. Higgins was always an abstemious liver, and habitually over-taxed his strength, these symptoms seemed less unfavourable than they would have done in a man who "fared sumptuously every day," and after a complete rest from his work of four months, spent at Grange, in Morecambe Bay, he returned to his duties, and continued to fulfil them uninterruptedly for four more years.

Mr. H. H. Higgins was one of the two sons of Mr. Higgins, of Turvey Abbey, Bedfordshire, both sons being remarkable men in their own walks of life.

Of the elder brother, the story of whose life may be read in "The Lives of Twelve Good Men," by the late Dean of Chichester, his brother-in-law, as the "Good Layman," it is not necessary to say more here than to remark that being the eldest son, in accordance with county family traditions, he was not allowed to act up to his desire to enter the Church, in which there is little doubt he would have arrived at a bishopric, whilst the subject of our memoir, because the second son, had to become a clergyman, although with no strong predilection for the office. The training for his future calling probably tended to hinder the development of Mr. Higgins' energies as a naturalist, and he might under more favourable circumstances have achieved a world-wide instead of little more than a local reputation as a naturalist and scientist, for he was very learned in all branches of natural history, especially in vegetable and invertebrate animal life, and the work done by him in collecting and arranging specimens of almost every known entomological order and species in the Liverpool Museum will remain as a monument to his memory as long as the Museum lasts.

Together with his intense love of natural history, he was (like Darwin) a keen and skilful sportsman, and as a companion in a fishing expedition he was charming. He was also an excellent musician, and in fact a good "all round" man. As chaplain to an asylum, he had sound ideas as to the nature and proper treatment of insane people, did not attempt impossibilities, and was always a courteous and loyal colleague.

When appointed to the chaplaincy at Rainhill, that asylum contained only 400 patients, and perhaps the absurdity of appropriating the entire time of a clergyman to minister to a handful of lunatics, when one man is sufficient for at least five times that number of sane people, could not be better illustrated than in the appointment of a man of Mr. Higgins' mental calibre to the office of chaplain.

He, however, by devoting so much of his time to scientific pursuits kept himself *au courant* with the outside world, both as to literature and science, and so escaped the temptation to which idle men, whether parsons or laymen, are prone.

Mr. Higgins was twice president of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophic Society, of which he became a member in 1846, was one of the founders and for very many years president of the Field Naturalists' Club, and had also been president of the Microscopic Society. It was characteristic of his energy that he took up the use of the microscope only quite late in life.

Although he has written no great work, he published numerous monographs from time to time, both on religious and scientific subjects. In 1876 he accompanied Mr. Reginald Cholmondeley as naturalist in a voyage to the West Indies in the steam yacht *Argo*, and published an account of his travels under the title of "Notes by a Field Naturalist in the Western Tropics." His description of Grange, under the head of "Notes by an Invalid Naturalist," is also a charming brochure.

In all his writings, whether one agreed with them or not, one could not help admiring both his thoroughness and style.

He died as he had lived—working, and in the act of writing a paper to be read on the following day at the meeting of the Museums Association in London, his pen still in his hand when his son came to look after him, a word half-finished, and not an error in what he had written.

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