

Patron: Lord Cobbold DL
Ivry, Lady Freyberg

THOMAS SPENCER COBBOLD MD FRS FLS

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Very few people have any idea of the quite extraordinary contribution to medical science made by **T Spencer Cobbold** (1828-1886) #174 on the family tree. To rectify this in some small way I make no apology for quoting his obituary from The British Medical Journal of march 27th 1886.

Dr. Spencer Cobbold had so thoroughly established his reputation both as an observer and as a writer on Helminthology, that his death will be felt as a distinct loss to English science. The special department in which he worked is one which touches on the general field of biology; and it was doubtless for this reason that it had so great an attraction to Dr. Cobbold, who belonged to the old school of naturalists, though his mind was open to the wider philosophic views which find favour with modern biologists.

Dr. Cobbold gave early signs, not only of general ability, as evidenced by the high academical honours he obtained at the conclusion of his curriculum in the University of Edinburgh, but of a special bent towards the study of natural History. He was appointed Curator of the Anatomical Museum of the University of Edinburgh, a post which he held until 1856, when he established himself in London. He quickly became known as a student of the habits and nature of parasitic beings, and his reputation was consolidated by the publication of his well-known work on Entozoa in 1864. In the same year, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society, and he received from other sources numerous other gratifying recognitions of the position he had achieved.



He became Vice-President of the Edinburgh University Club, honorary Vice-President of the Birmingham natural History and Microscopical Society, honorary corresponding member of the Academy of Science at Philadelphia, a foreign corresponding member of the Royal Agricultural Academy at Turin, an Emeritus Swiney Professor of Geology in connection with the British Museum. Dr. Cobbold was also for some time Examiner in Comparative Anatomy, Zoology, and Botany for the Natural Science Scholarship in St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, Lecturer on Parasitic Disease, Botany, Zoology, and Comparative Anatomy to the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, Senior President of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, Vice-President of the Physiological Society of Edinburgh, and President of the Quekett Microscopical Club.

He was elected Professor of Botany and Helminthology at the Royal Veterinary College in 1872, and discharged the duties of the latter chair until last session. Of the success of his teaching in this capacity it is not for us to speak; and we are glad to be able to quote the words of Professor Robertson, the Principal of the Royal Veterinary College, who says, "To him belongs the credit of having introduced the study of helminthology into the curriculum of the college. To his teaching in this department of science the veterinary profession, both in this country and throughout our colonies, is largely indebted."

Dr. Cobbold retired from active practice of his profession in 1877, but he did not cease to work diligently at his favourite subject. In 1879, he published a shorter work on Parasites; and very shortly before his death he was engaged on a paper on two species of "Strongylus", which was read at the meeting of the Linnean Society on 4th March. His health had, however, been rapidly failing during the past eighteen months, and he had recently suffered from frequent attacks of angina. In one of these he passed away, after a few hours' illness, on March 20th, in his 57th year of his age.