

AL/3652

William Edward Ayrton (1847-1908)

- 1) Prof Physics + Telegraphy Imp. Experiments
College Tokio
 - 2) Prof City + Guilds London
Central Tech College, now
 - 3) Prof Ph + Tely City + Guilds College S Ven.
- FRS 1881 Roy Medal 1901.

* Married 1871 his Cousin Mabella Chaplin
 + " 1885 Sarah (Hertha) Marks, a
 distinguished Girton student who was in 1906
 awarded the Hughes Medal of the R.S. for
 her researches on the electric arc + on
 Sand ripples.

* One daughter M^{rs} Zangwill
 + " " M^{rs} Gerald Gerald

* Medical pioneer - Prelim exam Apptt Hall Thesis
 required further. One of the 6 at Edin Univ
 matriculated here, but refused later. Took
lectures Medical Society Honours in Law Surgery
Hall Edinburgh

Went Paris Bach in Science + Bach in Letters
 Married Ayrton (an Oxon student) 1872.
 Cert. Midwifery 1873 from London Obstetric
 Soc. Went with husband to Japan + started
 school for native midwives there. Returned
 back 1877 with sign of corruption. 1879
 degree M.D. at Paris. Later Lecturer of
 the King + Queen's College of Physicians in
 Ireland. Died London ~~1882~~ July 1883
 showed interest in educational + social position of
 women. Actively helped to establish Club for women
 students in Paris, + the Somerville Club for
 women in London.

281

W^m Ayrton

The Cause p 377

December

(December)

Even the RS had to give way; & when the question was asked in 1922
Council's opinion was that women ^{could} no longer be excluded & W^m Ayrton who had
been rejected ~~many~~ years before (on the ground that ~~women members were~~
~~not elected~~ under her ^{was specially} Charter & Statutes women ^{could} not be elected as Fellows.)
W^m no doubt have been admitted but for her death in August 1923)

W^m Ayrton

I think we can quite fairly assume that she would have
been elected because ¹⁾ they had shown ^{they would} ~~her~~ freedom from
prejudice in awarding her the Hughes Medal which is an important
distinction & ²⁾ I have been told that it is most unusual - if not
unprecedented - to give it to a person who is not a Fellow.

2) Because ^{as was generally known it was she who devised} ~~she had been~~
~~her invention~~ ^{since obtaining that distinction in 1906} of the ~~method~~ ^{the} of dispersing poison gas from the
trenches in the 1914-18 war had been of so much value.

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27 Wilfred Street
London S.W.4

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(Notes by Miss Philippa Strachey on the test case of Mrs Ayrton's application for admission as Fellow of the Royal Society, mentioned in "The Cause" by Mrs Ray Strachey, p.377)

Mrs Ayrton. The Cause p.377

Even the R.S. had to give way, and when the question was tested in December, 1922, Counsel's opinion was that women could no longer be excluded and Mrs Ayrton who had been excluded twenty years before (on the ground that under their Charters and Statutes women could not be elected as Fellows) would no doubt have been admitted ~~but~~ for her death in August 1923

I think we can quite fairly assume that Mrs Ayrton would have been elected: 1) because they had shown their goodwill and freedom from prejudice in according her the Hughes medal which is an important distinction, and as I have been told, it is most unusual, if not unprecedented to give it to a person who is not a Fellow. 2) Because it was generally known it was she who devised the method of dispersing poison gas from the trenches in the 1914-18 War