work; and while still in practice he had attained so great a reputation that in 1851 he was appointed to the chair of geology and natural history in Owen's College, Manchester. As the college developed, he parted with the less congenial portion of the complex duties of this chair, but retained the professorship of botany till 1892, when he retired, and established himself in the neighbourhood of London, where, with his devoted and amiable wife—a lady intellectually a fit companion for any scientific man—and his youngest son, a promising student of art, he enjoyed the leisure necessary to pursue his favourite studies and the companionship of the many scientific men of that great centre.

Like most of the greater men of his time, he was less a specialist than is usual with the younger men of science. His earlier papers relate to a variety of zoological and geological subjects, as well as to fossil botany; and one of his larger publications, that on British Foraminifera, issued by the Ray Society, has long been a standard work of reference on both sides of the Atlantic.

In later years, however, he restricted himself to the fossil plants of the coal-formation, and more especially to the investigation of their structures as revealed by the microscope. He was attracted to this by the specimens retaining their structure, which are found in nodules in the coal-fields near Manchester as well as in the Scottish coal-fields; and he laboured day after day on this apparently unpromising material, making with his own hands slices for the microscope in the directions necessary to reveal the minute structures. As a mere labour for the eye and hand. this was a herculean task; but with Williamson it was much more, for he possessed the scientific knowledge and insight which enabled him to put together the structure of a plant from detached fragments, and to interpret the true meaning of the parts of mineralized and often distorted specimens. The writer had the pleasure