

Obituary

DR. T. RICE HOLMES

WE regret to record the death of Dr. T. Rice Holmes, the widely known authority on Julius Caesar, which took place at the age of seventy-eight years on August 4 at Roehampton.

Thomas Rice Edward Holmes was born on May 24, 1855, at Moycashel, Co. Westmeath, and was educated at Merchant Taylors' School and Christ Church, Oxford, where he was a junior student. He took second-class honours in classical moderations and a first in the honours school of modern history. After taking his degree he became a schoolmaster and in 1885, having held appointments at Lincoln and Blackheath, he joined the staff of St. Paul's School. Here he remained until his retirement from the teaching profession twenty-four years later.

Holmes had already published two books, one on the Indian Mutiny and the other, "Four Famous Soldiers" (1889), which had received immediate and favourable acceptance from scholars, when his attention was turned to the study of Caesar's "Commentaries" and the campaigns therein described. In 1899 he published "Caesar's Conquest of Gaul" and in 1907 "Ancient Britain and the Invasions of Caesar". In these two books the problems of Caesar's record were attacked with scholarly thoroughness. Their aim was not merely to elucidate the actual text, but also to give a complete picture of the historical background in the areas of Caesar's operations, by a critical interpretation of the whole relevant material, literary, topographical, archaeological and ethnological. In the volume dealing with Britain, Holmes gave an account of the inhabitants of Britain from Palæolithic times down to the invasions of Claudius in A.D. 43. Although he invariably made an exhaustive examination of the literary material bearing on his problems, his work was no mere exercise of the study. His conclusions, many of which traversed convincingly the views put forward by Napoleon III, were based upon detailed topographical study and a careful investigation of the material evidence. His acute criticism of the interpretations of archaeological, linguistic and ethnological evidence put forward by others, especially by the late Sir John Rhys, whom he attacked with wit as well as scholarly penetration, led him to conclusions, many of which are of permanent value in the study of the prehistory and early history of western Europe, even though much fresh evidence has accumulated, and will continue to accumulate, since he wrote.

Holmes was also the author of other works on Roman history, written in his retirement, of which the most notable is "The Roman Republic", continued in "The Architect of the Roman Empire", published in 1929.

Holmes's work was recognised by an honorary

degree of D.Litt. of the University of Oxford and the D.Litt. degree of the University of Dublin, and he was a member of the British Academy.

MR. H. F. TAGG

THE death on August 9 at the age of fifty-nine years of Mr. Harry F. Tagg, keeper of the Museum at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, will be regretted by horticulturists as well as botanists. For a period of nearly forty years he had been associated with Edinburgh. He was appointed immediately after he had completed his training, and during the early years of his service his investigations covered a wide field. He was for a time, at the Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, the only assistant with scientific training, and he took a large share in the examination of material sent in from various sources for report. In the course of this essential work he devoted much of his attention to the diseases of plants and, as an expert upon the defects of timber, his advice was frequently sought.

In the establishment of the museum part of the Garden Mr. Tagg was conspicuously successful. For the purpose of collecting material he undertook, some thirty years ago, a journey to the Antipodes and brought back an interesting and important collection. Especially noteworthy were his methods of mounting and preserving museum specimens. His technique was unique, and his exhibits are monuments to his skill and to the care and pride which he took in his work.

In recent years the outstanding part of Mr. Tagg's work has related to *Rhododendron*, a genus which, during the last quarter of a century, had been enriched by a great influx of new species from western China, Tibet and Burma. Mr. Tagg's intimate acquaintance with this group of plants enabled him to deal successfully with much of this new material. In the *Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh*, he described many new species, and there and elsewhere published several important original papers on the subject. Problems associated with this genus, and an enormous number of inquiries from all over the world, were dealt with by Mr. Tagg, and his work received recognition from many horticultural institutions. Under the guidance of the late Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour, he assisted in the arrangement of the genus and he was responsible in no small degree for that work of importance both to botanists and to horticulturists entitled "The Species of *Rhododendron*", published by the Rhododendron Society in 1930.

During the last year or two his health had begun to fail, but in the end his passing was sudden. Mr. Tagg was a fellow of the Linnean Society. He was unmarried.