

Obituary

SIR ROBERT CARLYLE, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

ALTHOUGH even now natural science finds no place as a compulsory subject in the competitive examinations for the higher ranks of the public service, nevertheless the Indian Civil Service has often included in its ranks a few staunch supporters of the man of science. In this select band the late Sir Robert Warrand Carlyle, a kinsman of the 'sage of Chelsea', whose death in his seventy-fourth year occurred at Florence on May 23 last, takes an honoured place. Four years ago he was seriously injured by a motor-lorry in Essex, an accident which was followed by repeated attacks of pernicious anæmia which even his robust constitution could not long withstand.

Educated at the University of Glasgow and Balliol College, Oxford, Carlyle passed the Indian Civil Service Examination in 1878 and was duly posted to Bengal. In 1894 he reached the rank of magistrate and collector and served for many years in the District of Darbhanga, in which in 1904 Lord Curzon founded the Pusa Agricultural Research Institute. After eight years' service as a district officer he was called to headquarters at Calcutta, first as Inspector General of Police and then as Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

In 1907 Carlyle was selected for service under the Government of India as Secretary to the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, and for the next three years came in the closest touch with most of the scientific workers employed by the Central Government, both administratively and also as chairman of the Board of Scientific Advice.

With characteristic thoroughness, Carlyle applied himself to a close study of these somewhat unfamiliar activities, and also made a point of getting into personal touch with the workers themselves. In this latter task he was greatly assisted by Lady Carlyle, who took a deep personal interest in her husband's work and freely devoted her great social gifts to the entertainment of a constant stream of official visitors, many of whom were connected with some branch of science. After three years' service as Secretary, Carlyle was promoted in 1910 to a seat in the Viceroy's Council, his charge including the Department of Revenue and Agriculture and also the Public Works portfolio, an appointment he held until his retirement in 1915.

Carlyle was thus closely connected with the scientific activities of the Government of India for an unbroken period of eight years, during which he was particularly interested in agricultural research. He was a great friend to the Pusa Research Institute, which he visited on many occasions, and he also found time to attend the meetings of the Board of Agriculture. Under his fostering care the Institute developed with great

rapidity: the workers were constantly encouraged to give of their best. The agricultural departments in the provinces were not forgotten. Large sums of money were placed at their disposal for extensive seed farms for the production of pure seed of the new varieties of wheat created at Pusa and at other centres. A new cane-breeding station was founded in South India at Coimbatore.

Carlyle did much to foster and promote the co-operative credit movement and to bring about effective liaison between its officers and those of the agricultural departments working in the Districts. Other interests included the encouragement of the Indian Science Congress, the meetings of which his officers were permitted to attend while on duty, and at which they were given the greatest freedom in the reading and discussion of papers. Carlyle was always insistent that the scientific workers under the Government of India should look upon themselves as free and independent investigators and not as members of a bureaucracy.

The well-being of agricultural research and the development of the co-operative credit movement were only two of Carlyle's interests. He did much to encourage the scientific study of forestry; he took a deep interest in the Survey of India and in the planning of New Delhi. In these and other similar activities, the scientific workers concerned always found in him a sympathetic and responsive chief and one who spared no pains to understand their point of view and to make them feel that, so far as in him lay, they could rely on getting a square deal.

DR. J. D. GIMLETTE

DR. JOHN DESMOND GIMLETTE, whose death on April 24 we regret to record, was born on February 28, 1867. After gaining medical qualifications (M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., London), as from St. Thomas' Hospital, he at first designed entering practice in the English colony at Lisbon. Later he joined the medical service of the Federated Malay States (Selangor, Perak and Pahang), eventually becoming Residency surgeon for Kelantan and Kota Bharu.

In Malaya, Dr. Gimlette soon became interested in native medicaments and poisons, a subject which occupied him up to the end. In Kelantan, a region little tainted by Western influences, his opportunities were enhanced by innate knowledge of the language and by the confidence which his frank and sympathetic nature impressed on the Malay. Jealous in regard to native secrets, they allowed him to witness, for example, mysteries such as those of Main Peteri, which are recounted in his work "Malay Poisons and Charm Cures" (Third edition, 1929. London: Churchill).

Though much had been done botanically by Ridley, Burkill, the workers at Buitenzorg