

OBITUARIES

Mr. C. M. Hutchinson, C.I.E.

MR. CLAUD MACKENZIE HUTCHINSON, who died on August 2, at the age of seventy-two, was a pioneer in the field of agricultural bacteriology in India and also contributed notably to a wide variety of problems of tropical soil, fermentation and medical science. He was educated at Glenalmond and St. John's, Cambridge, where he got his 'blue' for golf in 1889-90 and graduated in 1891.

After some years as professor of chemistry at the Colonial College, Hollesley, he joined the scientific staff of the Indian Tea Association in Assam in 1904 and succeeded Dr. Harold H. Mann as scientific officer to the Association in 1907. In 1909 he was appointed Imperial agricultural bacteriologist at Pusa. He retired from the Indian Agricultural Service in 1926 and soon afterwards became chief scientific adviser to Messrs. Imperial Chemical Industries (India), a post he held until he returned to Great Britain in 1931.

Hutchinson's best scientific work was done at Pusa and received official recognition by the C.I.E. conferred on him in 1920. While in Assam he became interested in the cycle of nitrogen in tropical soils and this subject occupied much of his time and thought at Pusa. His publications on the influence of bacteria on soil fertility (1911), on nitrogen fixation in Indian soils (1919), on nitrogenous fertilizers in India (1919), on fermented green manures (1923) and on the conservation of humus in Indian soils (1927) were offshoots from this work but the main part was never published, for a serious illness struck him down a few days after he started to assemble the results on his return from the East. But the work itself had a widely stimulating effect in India: to cite one instance only, it was Hutchinson's studies on the fermenting of green plant residues that led to R. D. Anstead's activated composts, afterwards developed in conjunction with Gilbert Fowler and now attracting so much attention in Great Britain in connexion with the disposal of town waste.

An outstanding work on the bacterial wilt of tobacco, a fascinating study of the rice beer ferment 'bakt', work on the pebrine disease of silkworms, on the bacteriology of indigo manufacture and on indigenous sources of phosphoric acid, the development with W. Hodgkinson of the electrolytic chlorine (E.C.) process of sterilizing water, studies on the micro-anatomy of *Cimex* for the research workers on kala azar, and on antiseptic measures for use in sugar factories, were some of the other scientific contributions from an astonishingly fertile mind.

This versatility was the keynote of Hutchinson's character. He was an exceptionally gifted photographer and in addition to making the photographic section at Pusa one of the best of its kind, published notes on photographic illustrations and on photomicrography, and prepared a number of cinema films for agricultural propaganda. His advice on the laying down and maintenance of turf for golf courses was much sought. Landscape painting and bridge,

at which he was highly proficient, were a solace when illness prevented outdoor activities, as was increasingly the case in recent years. He was an interesting and refreshingly acid conversationalist and debater.

Many friends will mourn a picturesque and stimulating personality. His marriage in 1914 to Alice Muriel, daughter of J. Walter Leather, Imperial agricultural chemist at Pusa, who survives him, was an exceptionally happy one; her untiring care did much to make possible the considerable scientific output he accomplished in spite of persistent illness.

E. J. BUTLER.

Dr. H. R. Spencer

DR. HERBERT RITCHIE SPENCER, the well-known London consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology, who died on August 28, was born at Atherstone in Warwickshire on January 16, 1860. Contrary to what has sometimes been stated, he was no relation of his namesake the famous philosopher. He received his scientific and medical education at University College, London.

Besides numerous contributions to periodical literature on the clinical aspects of his speciality he took a keen interest in its historical side and medical history generally. He played an active part in the Third International Congress of the History of Medicine held in London in 1922, and delivered the Harveian Oration before the Royal College of Physicians on "William Harvey: Obstetric Physician and Gynaecologist" in 1921, the Fitzpatrick Lecture before the same body on "The History of British Midwifery (1650-1800)" in 1927, and the Lloyd Roberts Lecture on "The Renaissance of Midwifery" before the Medical Society of London in 1924. He also read a paper at University College Hospital on "Medicine in the Days of Shakespeare" in 1929. He possessed a remarkable collection of old books connected with his subject, besides being a constant reader in the library of the Royal Society of Medicine and a valuable member of the Library Committees of this Society and of the Royal College of Physicians for many years. He was an accomplished scholar and delighted in translating Horace and Goethe.

Spencer received many distinctions at home and abroad. He was honorary LL.D. of the University of Aberdeen, and in 1923 was president of the Medical Society of London.

J. D. ROLLESTON.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Mr. W. H. Caldwell, formerly University lecturer in biology in the University of Cambridge, known for his work on the embryology of the Monotremata and Marsupialia, on August 28, aged eighty-two.

Mr. H. Grindell-Matthews, known for his inventions in the field of radio-telephony, on September 11, aged sixty-one.

Dr. Robert Thomas Hill, geologist of the United States Geological Survey during 1889-1904, aged eighty-three.