

OBITUARIES

Prof. G. A. Reisner

THE death on June 6 last of George Andrew Reisner, professor of Egyptology at Harvard University, has removed from our midst one of the greatest and most successful excavators Egypt has ever known. His rival for the foremost place could indeed only be Sir William Flinders Petrie, his senior by some ten years, who is happily still with us. To assess the comparative merits of these two would be invidious, but a few sentences may perhaps attempt to sum up the special merits of each. Petrie has been essentially the pioneer. Before him, excavation was but a haphazard affair; no attention paid to detail, often in fact left to untrained native foremen. Petrie's field-work, starting full fifteen years before that of his American colleague, was the first to inaugurate careful planning of sites, with complete recording of pottery and smaller objects; and the prompt annual publication of results has been the greatest boon to our science. It cannot be gainsaid that Reisner greatly improved upon Petrie's methods. Never has there been such meticulous regard to the smallest objects, photography applied at every stage, the most careful training and organization of the workpeople, voluminous notes compiled with unremitting patience; and scholarly philological training at the back of it all. Alas, the inevitable consequence of such minuteness has been that publication has often been unduly deferred. Reisner's books are fairly numerous, always bulky, but their content covers only a fraction of the work that he achieved. It is devoutly to be hoped that those into whose hands his material now passes will repair the miscalculation here deplored. Thus only shall we be enabled to measure the full stature of the man, and derive complete profit from the astonishing achievements of his career.

From early work on cuneiform tablets, for which he received his training in Berlin, Reisner soon switched over to Egyptian studies, and in 1899 took charge of the Hearst Egyptian expedition to Upper Egypt. Here he unearthed important cemeteries of the early periods, especially at Naga ed-Dér, near Girgah. In 1905 began the excavations on behalf of Harvard University which were continued down to his death, interrupted only by the three years spent in charge of the Egyptian Government Survey in Nubia (1907-9). Investigations in various Nubian cemeteries led on to excavations much farther south, when the tombs of many late Ethiopian kings were discovered, and a most interesting settlement of Middle Kingdom date explored at Kerma. Two seasons at Samaria (1909-10) brought to light the palaces of Omri and Ahab, with many important remains.

But it was in the neighbourhood of the Pyramids of Gîzah that Reisner scored his greatest successes. The laying bare of the temple of the Third Pyramid resulted in the discovery of marvellous statuary, chief among which was the great slate group now in Boston of King Mycerinus and his mother. Even more valuable were the results of the excavations around the Great Pyramid. Here the symmetrically laid-out necropolis city of the nobles and princes of the time of Cheops was systematically investigated, the crowning find being that of the secret burying-place of that Pharaoh's mother, Queen Hetepheres. The chaste sobriety of the magnificent furniture found in this untouched burial forms a remarkable contrast to the

far richer, but sometimes garish, treasures from the Theban tomb of Tutankhamûn, the most sensational archaeological discovery ever made.

This inadequate account cannot conclude without a brief impression of the man himself. He was an American of the Americans. With his powerful figure and forthright utterance he reminded one of Theodore Roosevelt, but hand in hand with these somewhat awe-inspiring characteristics went a kindness and hospitality unforgettable for those who, like the present writer, often benefited by them.

ALAN H. GARDINER.

Mr. C. C. A. Monro

CHARLES CARMICHAEL ARTHUR MONRO, who died on June 21, came of a Scottish family that has had many distinguished members. It included three generations of professors of anatomy at the University of Edinburgh, all bearing the name of Alexander Monro, the second of whom (1733-1817) has given his name to the "foramina of Monro", which connect certain ventricles of the vertebrate brain. His great-grandson, David Binning Monro (1836-1905), was provost of Oriol College, Oxford, and a well-known Homeric scholar. Charles Monro was born in India on September 14, 1894, the younger son of the late Alexander Monro, who was director of public instruction, Central Provinces, and whose elder son, Alexander Monro, has also had a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service. An uncle, the late General Sir Charles Monro, was commander-in-chief at the Dardanelles in 1915, and afterwards Governor and commander-in-chief of Gibraltar.

Monro was educated at Charterhouse, Eton (where he was a King's scholar) and Trinity College, Oxford. Going up to Oxford in 1913, he took Pass Moderations in Classics in 1914, and began to read for the Honour School of Lit. Hum. His studies were, however, interrupted by the outbreak of war. He served in France and Belgium, and was wounded and suffered shell-shock in 1916. Returning to Oxford in 1920, Monro, who had become interested in zoology, decided to read for the Honour School of Natural Science in that subject, and did so until 1922.

After brief experiments in business and agricultural practice, Monro was appointed in November 1922 to an assistant keepership in the Department of Zoology, British Museum (Natural History), and was placed in charge of the collections of Annelids and Echinoderms. While doing a good deal of curatorial work on these collections, and being responsible for their removal from the Old to the New Spirit Building of the Museum in 1924, he devoted his attention mainly to the Annelids, and in particular to the Polychæte worms. In the course of the years 1924-39 he published some thirty-seven systematic memoirs, many of which were important contributions to the subject. They included, besides smaller papers, extensive reports on the large collections obtained by the *Discovery*, Great Barrier Reef, John Murray and B.A.N.Z. Antarctic Research Expeditions, as well as reports on collections made by smaller expeditions (*St. George*, *Rosaura*, etc.). There can be no doubt that Monro was well on the way to become a leading authority on the Polychæta. An interesting investigation of his was that on a species of Serpulid new to British waters, which he named *Hydroïdes incrustans*. This was found forming extensive incrustations in an enclosed harbour canal in Sussex,