

skilful hand. Take, for example, the description of the great adventure by which marine animals adapted themselves to a terrestrial existence and yet still carry the salt of the archaic sea in their internal economy. Avoiding anthropomorphism in his discussion of 'higher and lower' forms of life, he still claims that range of dominance of the environment is a feature to which the term 'higher' can be accorded. Since mind is one of the great keys to this dominance, the term is almost graded by degrees of mind. At the present time, man is, as regards conquest of his surroundings, the most successful of all living forms. On that ground we can acclaim him the highest of all living forms.

It is towards greater control over that environment, which also involves greater control over ourselves, that the lessons of biology and all its application should lead. For in the wise words of Plato, "Civilisation is the victory of persuasion over force".

HENRY TRIMEN, F.R.S. (1843-96)

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HENRY TRIMEN was born in Paddington, London, on October 26, 1843. He received his education at King's College School (then in the Strand) and even as a schoolboy showed an ardent liking for natural history, beginning to form a herbarium and frequently visiting the Botanical Department of the British Museum to determine his collections. As with so many others of those days, he found his best opportunity of receiving further biological training lay in the study of medicine, and from school he entered the Medical College at King's in 1860, graduating M.B. with honours in 1865. After graduation he held for a short time an appointment as medical officer during a cholera epidemic in the Strand. But already it was clear that his main interest lay in the field of systematic botany. For this subject he was exceptionally well endowed with a natural ability for thorough and accurate observation and with a strong interest in historical studies, while his work throughout was characterized by a breadth of outlook to which his medical background made no small contribution.

As an amateur botanist, Trimen had already made a name for himself by adding to the British flora our smallest known flowering plant—the duckweed *Wolffia arrhiza*—and he had also taken an active part in the proceedings of such bodies as the Society of Amateur Botanists (now defunct) and the Botanical Exchange Club. Official recognition soon followed in his appointment, in 1867, as lecturer in botany at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School and, two years later, as assistant in the Department of Botany at the British Museum. His position now gave full scope to his abilities and he applied himself actively to his chosen fields of interest. In systematic and topographical botany, his best-known early work was the "Flora of Middlesex", projected as a joint publication with his former school-fellow Dyer (afterwards Sir W. T. Thiselton-Dyer) and completed in 1869. Several other papers followed, including critical studies of British species of *Polygonum*, *Rumex*, etc. His work in the interests of the botanical community in general was of no less importance and included the arduous task of editing the *Journal of Botany* for nearly ten years. He took an active part also on the

council of the Linnean Society of London, of which he had been a fellow since 1869. Finally, mention must be made of the notable series on "Medicinal Plants", undertaken in collaboration with Prof. Bentley, and published in instalments from 1875 onwards. Trimen's contributions to British botany were brought to a close in 1879, on his departure for Ceylon to become director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya.

In Ceylon, Trimen will always be remembered as the author of the monumental "Handbook to the Flora of Ceylon". This work, dealing with nearly 2,800 species of flowering plants in more than a thousand genera, was planned on a generous scale following the arrangement of the "Flora of British India". It was the result of much preliminary research into the Island's flora and the history of its investigation, from the work of Hermann in the seventeenth century and the publication of Linnaeus's "Flora Zeylanica" in 1747, to the appearance of Thwaites' "Enumeratio" in 1864. The first volume of the "Handbook" appeared in 1893 and the author himself completed two more volumes in his life-time, covering the dicotyledons from the families Ranunculaceae to Balanophoraceae, inclusive. The remaining families of dicotyledons, with the monocotyledons and cycads, were covered in two more volumes by Sir J. D. Hooker, working in part from Trimen's notes. The Flora, thus completed in five volumes by 1900, was revised and extended in A. H. G. Alston's supplementary volume issued in the same format in 1931.

Trimen's work for Ceylon botany in its widest aspects was not confined to the systematic examination of the country's flora: his labours are also commemorated to no small extent in the comprehensive collections and spacious arrangement of the world-famous Gardens of which he was the director. In his official capacity he also took a prominent part in developing the Island's important tea and rubber planting industries, and in introducing many of its fruits and other exotic agricultural products. He retained all his old interest and pleasure in the society of other botanists, and from time to time welcomed to Peradeniya such eminent visitors as F. O. Bower, K. Goebel, G. Haberlandt, M. C. Potter, J. B. Farmer, F. W. Keeble, and others. In fact, while on leave in England in 1886, he was in part instrumental in obtaining from the British Association a grant towards equipping a laboratory at Peradeniya at which British and other visiting botanists were provided with facilities for their work.

Trimen died on October 16, 1896, having returned to Ceylon from leave in the previous year, against the entreaties of all his friends. He had by then become totally deaf and was also paralysed in one leg. He died, as he had lived, in single-hearted devotion to his work, almost his last moments of consciousness being occupied with attempts to write a few notes in continuance of his "Flora". His end has been most movingly described in the memoir by James Britten in the *Journal of Botany* for that year. In the country of his adoption, Trimen's early death was felt alike as a great loss to tropical botany and as the passing of a friend to all sections of the Ceylon public. Of him it could be said, in the words of the writer of a later commemorative article published in the *Ceylon Tropical Agriculturist*, that "a more obliging official, more attentive correspondent, or more pleasant friend and genial man than Dr. Trimen never came to Ceylon".