

## OBITUARIES

13/6  
Mr. P. Bruce White, F.R.S.

THE scientific achievements of Philip Bruce White, who died on March 19, at the age of fifty-seven, was a remarkable example of a contribution to medical bacteriology by a non-medical man. Bruce White came of a Scottish family whose connexions included the late Mr. J. C. Philip and Sir Robert Philip, the well-known professor of tuberculosis in Edinburgh. He himself was born and brought up in Bangor, where his father, P. J. White, was the first lecturer in zoology and later for many years professor of this subject in the University College of North Wales. It was from his father that Bruce White acquired his enduring interest in biology, although the intellectual approaches of the two men to the subject had little in common; the father was a natural historian with the interests and the habits of mind of the collector, whereas the son was above all a versatile and ingenious experimenter.

Bruce White was educated at Friar's School, Bangor, and later at the University College of North Wales, where he graduated in science in 1915, his chief subjects being botany and zoology; his first essay in bacteriology was an undergraduate research on black rot in mangolds. His original intention had been to study medicine after graduation in science, but the desire to take a more active part in the First World War caused him to abandon this plan, although he did go so far as to take an extramural course in human anatomy at Edinburgh. With the object of improving his knowledge of bacteriology he went to the Lister Institute, where he came under the influence of the late Sir Joseph Arkwright. After a few months he accepted a post as assistant pathologist at Trinity College, Dublin, an appointment which plunged him into work far outside his experience and eventually involved him in the excitement of the Easter Rebellion of 1916.

Bruce White finally found direct war-time employment when he was appointed civilian pathologist at Tidworth Military Hospital, where he worked until 1919. On his release from this duty he joined a team working on bee disease at Aberdeen, and here he found the opportunity for his first important scientific contribution. It was due to his shrewd observation that a mite infestation was identified as the cause of Isle of Wight disease in bees.

Having left Aberdeen, and after an interval of teaching at Bangor and work for the Fisheries Board, Bruce White in 1921 joined in studies of food poisoning organised by the Medical Research Council and the Ministry of Health; this appointment marked the beginning of his serious career as a bacteriologist and of the work for which he will be chiefly remembered, namely, his studies of the *Salmonella* group. The research extended over many years; it was conducted first under Dr. W. G. Savage at Bristol and later at the Lister Institute and at the National Institute for Medical Research, which he joined as a member of the scientific staff of the Medical Research Council in 1927; it led to the classification of a most important group of organisms and provided the basis for diagnostic methods now universally employed. In more recent years Bruce White worked principally on cholera; here again his interest was mainly in the precise characterization of the pathogenic strains of cholera vibrios and in their relationships to harmless

related organisms. The reputation which he had established as an authority on the bacteriology of cholera caused him to be invited to India in 1946 to take part in and advise on cholera research in that country, and in 1947 to be sent to investigate the epidemic of cholera in Cairo.

Bruce White was something of an original in medical research. He was essentially an individual investigator, unsystematic in his methods and having a curious nocturnal habit of work as unconventional as had been his training. His zeal for experimentation far outran his inclination to keep records. With all this he achieved much, and his main contributions will live in the history of bacteriology. Outside his work he had a keen interest in art and a deep knowledge and appreciation of French literature. He was a man with a keen sense of humour and a great kindness of nature. Above all, he had the lovable characteristic of a catholic gift for friendship, and for this he will be held in affectionate remembrance by all who knew him. The sympathy of his many friends will be with his widow and two sons in their bereavement.

C. R. HARRINGTON

11/6  
Capt. G. C. Shortridge

CAPT. GUY C. SHORTRIDGE, director of the Kaffrarian Museum, King William's Town, South Africa, died suddenly while working alone in the Museum on January 12. He was born on June 21, 1880, at Honiton, Devon, where his father was in medical practice. From his earliest youth, Shortridge was interested in natural history, and after serving in the South African Constabulary during the Boer War, he was engaged by the late Mr. W. L. Sclater, then director of the South African Museum, to collect mammals and birds in Pondoland and the Colesberg district. After he had returned to England, he made the acquaintance of Oldfield Thomas, who arranged for him to collect mammals and birds in south-west Australia. Then he went to west Java and brought back a great collection of 1,500 mammals. In 1908 he went to Guatemala to obtain live animals for the Zoological Society, and on his return joined the British Ornithologists' Union jubilee expedition to New Guinea. In 1911 the Bombay Natural History Society inaugurated a mammal survey, and Shortridge was engaged to collect for the Society. He did good work in southern India and then was sent to Burma. Previously little systematic collecting had been done there, and our present knowledge of the mammals of that country is due to his excellent work.

He saw service in the First World War in France, Palestine and Iraq, where he was attached to the Royal Air Force as an observer. After the signing of the armistice he was appointed second-in-command of the R.A.F. Cape-to-Cairo aerodrome survey, and, on completion, went to collect mammals in Northern Rhodesia for the British Museum. While on that expedition he was appointed director of the Kaffrarian Museum, and took charge in 1921. Thereafter, scarcely a year passed without Shortridge making an expedition to some part of the Union. He first confined his attention to South-west Africa, financed partly by the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund, and the results of the expedition were described by Thomas and Hinton. In 1930-33 he published "The Mammals of South-west Africa".