

OBITUARIES

Prof. Eric S. Horning

ON November 14, 1959, British cancer research lost one of its prominent figures by the death of Dr. E. S. Horning, professor of experimental pathology in the University of London at the Chester Beatty Research Institute. Australian by birth, he served as a volunteer with the Imperial Forces during the First World War, and went to Oxford in 1920 to start his professional career in the honours school of comparative anatomy and zoology.

Having taken his degree, he went into research, first in Melbourne with Prof. Agar and later with A. Fischer in Berlin-Dahlem and E. V. Cowdry and A. Carrel in the United States. From this period stem numerous papers dealing with the behaviour of mitochondria and other cytological problems. The excellence of his early work was soon recognized. In 1932 he contributed by invitation an article on the enzymatic function of mitochondria to "Ergebnisse der Enzymforschung", and in 1941 he wrote in G. Bourne: "Cytology and Cell Physiology" the chapter on micro-incineration and the inorganic constituents of cells, a subject on which he was an authority.

Armed with a comprehensive knowledge of cytology and histology, and well versed in the methods of tissue culture, in 1933 he returned to England, the country he loved more than any other, where he spent the rest of his life but for the years of the Second World War, during which he served again with great distinction in the Armed Forces.

In 1933 Dr. Horning joined the staff of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund as a Beit Fellow; when six years later the outbreak of war called him from the bench he had made his name as a cancer investigator. A series of brilliant papers had appeared in which Cramer and Horning recorded their original observations, shedding new light on the pathogenesis of the tumours of the breast, pituitary and thymus, and establishing the role of the adrenals in the development of these tumours.

In 1947 Dr. Horning accepted an invitation by Prof. A. Haddow to go to the Chester Beatty Research Institute as reader in experimental pathology. There he worked until the end, his scientific activities continuing unabated in spite of periods of indifferent health. Testimony to his persistent interest in the endocrinological aspects of cancer are the chapters in "Oestrogens and Neoplasia", his contribution to "Causation of Cancer" in the *British Medical Bulletin* 1958, and his papers on the experimental cancers of the prostate and the oestrogen-induced tumours of the kidney. Although from 1936 onward the role of hormones in neoplasia was the main theme of his endeavours, by his studies of the action of carcinogenic compounds on grafted tissues he made notable contributions to chemical carcinogenesis. Besides, his considerable experience with the pathology of the experimental and spontaneous tumours of rodents made him an invaluable collaborator in many projects of the Chester Beatty Research Institute. *Inter alia*, he described with Boyland the tumours induced by nitrogen mustards in mice, and with Alexander the reaction of the subcutaneous tissue of the rat to implanted plastic films.

Anybody who had the privilege to visit Dr. Horning in his laboratory and to look at some of his slides could only admire the beauty of his histological preparations, and was no longer astonished by the excellence of the photomicrographs which adorn his papers. The high quality of the material on which Dr. Horning's results were based and the elegance of his techniques rather than ingenuity of speculation were the basis of the high esteem he enjoyed among his colleagues at home and abroad. But, above all, few men had his gift for friendship and a heart so warm and generous. Only those who have worked with him know how easy he made life for his collaborators and how much he did unselfishly to further the work of the Institute. For his human and scientific qualities the memory of Eric Horning will be cherished in many lands.

F. BIELSCHOWSKY

Mr. W. E. Dick

WITH the sudden death of William E. Dick at the early age of forty-five, scientific journalism has lost one of the greatest exponents of this now rapidly expanding and increasingly important field—a field which shows signs of becoming to-day almost as important to the scientist, as a means of keeping him informed of developments in other fields as well as his own, as to the intelligent layman who wishes to learn about scientific and technological progress. He was successively editor of *Discovery* (1945–56), *British Chemical Engineering* (1956–58), and *Chemistry and Industry*, the journal of the Society of Chemistry and Industry. Prior to that he had held posts on the *Grantham Journal* (1941) and the *South Western Star*, which he joined in 1942. For a brief period he then worked as assistant editor to *Chemical Age*, before joining *Discovery* in a full-time capacity in September 1944.

William Dick was born at Walthamstow on July 12, 1914, and was educated at King's School, Wimbledon, where he took a State scholarship at the age of fifteen to the Imperial College of Science and Technology to read biology. Although he left the Imperial College before his degree was completed, his training was not purely journalistic, for he later became a qualified scientist, taking an external B.Sc. degree at the Chelsea Polytechnic in 1942. He was also elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society.

During the War he served with the Auxiliary Fire Service during the first months, and then at the British Expeditionary Force, Royal Army Service Corps Headquarters in France before being evacuated when France surrendered. Then he transferred to one of the camouflage units of the Royal Engineers at Farnham. He entered journalism in August 1941, after being invalided out from the Army.

When Bill Dick became editor of the newly revived *Discovery*, science writing was still, as I was made only too well aware on numerous occasions, regarded as a 'bastard art', more often than not despised by the scientist and badly handled by the Press. By setting a standard of journalistic and scientific reporting that raised *Discovery* from being a relatively unknown journal to one that had a readership throughout the world, and was renowned and highly

regarded as a scientific paper, Dick showed and taught others that science writing could be a valued and respected branch of science. In the process he also not merely set a new standard for other people to follow, but also helped to give invaluable advice and training to many new-comers venturing into this field. Besides his activities as editor for *Discovery*, Dick also wrote many articles, one of the best known of which was "Science and the Press", which was written in 1954 for the journal *Impact*. Here he set out many of the problems he had encountered and the ideals in which he believed. He also wrote, or contributed to, a number of books as, for example, "Science and the Welfare of Mankind", written in conjunction with I. B. N. Evans, published by Simpkin Marshall in 1946, and "The Story of Energy", published in 1951 for the Bureau of Current Affairs. In 1957, Butterworths Scientific Publications brought out his "Atomic Energy in Agriculture".

Dick's interests, indeed, were catholic in the extreme, every field of science intrigued and on occasion excited him, although professionally by qualification he was a biologist. The latter fact explains perhaps to some degree his immense interest in flowering plants and the joy and enthusiasm which he brought to his gardening.

Despite his many achievements, William Dick suffered for twenty years from a long series of illnesses of increasing severity. The debt owed him by scientific journalism is immense, and his early passing is an occasion of great sadness. Personally, also, he will be missed as one of the kindest and most generous of people, especially in times of trouble.

DEREK WRAGGE MORLEY

It is impossible to conceive of any scientist, certainly of any editor or journalist, who was not shocked by the news of Bill Dick's sudden death or who will not now miss his entertaining chatter and stimulating pronouncements on science, especially on the exposition of science.

Although he was initially a reporting journalist and eventually an editor, he was never satisfied merely to sit down and rewrite into more readable form scientific reports and research publications which came to hand. He really believed that the good editor wears out the soles of his shoes rather than the seat of his pants. He went after news personally and wrote it up personally. For this reason alone, it is true that as Mr. Wragge Morley writes: "*Discovery* [metamorphosed] from being a relatively unknown journal to one that had a readership throughout the world, and was renowned and highly regarded as a scientific paper". Though *Discovery* still maintains this excellent standard, I am sure the present editor would be the first to admit that this happy editorial evolution was originally inspired by Bill Dick.

Dick's remarkable achievements and his engaging, though somewhat naïve, personality did not pass unnoticed, especially among his journalistic and editorial colleagues. For example, 1956 saw the tenth anniversary of the new *Discovery* which coincided with the tenth anniversary of Bill Dick's editorship. To mark this double event, a sherry party was held to which only editors and science writers were invited. It was significant that everybody who had been invited attended to pay tribute to Dick and *Discovery*.

Bill had a warm heart and a ready tongue. He had a real gift for nosing out news. His sincerity

could never be challenged, for if he admired a person or his achievements he was lavish with praise; but woe betide anybody who, in his opinion, was not playing the game. You always knew how you stood with Bill.

It is a tragedy that science and especially the exposition of science (mainly through popular publications) has now to suffer the loss of this remarkable man; for science still suffers from a dearth of good writers, in spite of the fact that, as Mr. Wragge Morley says: "Science writing [is] a valued and respected branch of science".

The presentation of scientific advancements and achievements in an understandable form has now become an essential branch of science itself. Research cannot go on indefinitely behind closed doors; there must eventually be a fearless exposition and interpretation of the truths it unfolds. Bill Dick believed this and worked selflessly and passionately to this end.

L. J. F. BRIMBLE

Dr. H. P. Wilkins

HUGH PERCIVAL WILKINS, the distinguished selenographer, died at his home at Bexleyheath, in Kent, on January 23.

Wilkins was never a professional astronomer. He was born and educated in Carmarthen, and after serving in the Army during the First World War he became an engineer. His main interest lay, however, in astronomy. Though he made useful planetary observations from time to time, he concentrated almost entirely upon the Moon, and by 1924 had completed a lunar map 60 in. in diameter. Eight years later he commenced work upon an even larger chart, to a scale of 300 in. to the Moon's diameter. A prodigious amount of work went into this project; except during occasional periods of ill-health, Wilkins was nearly always busy at his telescope whenever the sky was clear and the Moon visible. The 300-in. map was published in 1951, and he then undertook a further revision, which appeared in 1954. Yet another revision was planned, though unfortunately he did not live to complete it.

After his marriage, Wilkins moved from Wales to Kent, and set up a 12½-in. reflector, later replaced by a 15½-in. instrument. It was with this equipment that he carried out most of his work, though he also made numerous observations with very large instruments in both Europe and the United States. He was a regular contributor to many scientific periodicals, and held the position of director of the Lunar Section of the British Astronomical Association from 1946 until his resignation ten years later. In 1941 he gave up practical engineering, and joined the Ministry of Supply, retiring only at the end of 1959 with the intention of spending the last part of his life in astronomical work.

Wilkins was well known as a lecturer on astronomy; he made frequent broadcasts on both sound radio and television, and was the author of seven books, the last of which was completed only a few days before his death. In 1955 the University of Barcelona conferred on him an honorary Ph.D. degree in recognition of his work for selenography.

Wilkins was above all a kindly man; he was unfailingly courteous, and could never understand those who were not. His enthusiasm for astronomy was inspiring, and he was always ready to help others. A deep sense of personal loss will be felt by his many friends all over the world.

PATRICK MOORE