Obituary

J. F. C. Fryer A. D. Imms F. Silvestri

We regret to announce the death, during the past few months of three workers each of whom contributed greatly in his special sphere to the advancement of entomological science.

Sir John Fryer, who was born on August 13, 1886, received his education at Cambridge University. After participating in several scientific expeditions to the Indian Ocean, he became the first Entomologist to the Board of Agriculture of the United Kingdom and later the Director of the National Laboratory of Plant Pathology at Harpenden. He was largely responsible for the organization of the advisory and quarantine services of the Ministry of Agriculture. He served on many important scientific bodies and in 1938-39 was President of the Entomological Society of London. He was knighted in 1946 and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1948. His extensive knowledge in the field of scientific agriculture was recognized by his appointment to the important post of Secretary of the Agricultural Research Council. The heavy pressure of his official duties and his rather indifferent health in later years considerably restricted Fryer's work in the field of pure science; but owing to his official position and his keen appreciation of the value of research, his influence on the development of entomology in Great Britain was great and beneficial.

Dr. A. D. Imms, best known to entomologists by his excellent "Text Book of Entomology" and the successive editions of his "Recent Advances in Entomology", was born on August 20, 1880. He was educated in the Universities of Birmingham and Cambridge. After graduating from Cambridge he spent several years as Professor of Biology in the University of Allahabad, India. From 1911 to 1913 he was Forest Zoologist to the Government of India, after which he returned to England to become Reader in Entomology in the University of Manchester (1913-18). In 1918 he was appointed Chief Entomologist of the Rothamsted Experiment Station. In 1931 he accepted a position as Reader in Entomology in the University of Cambridge, where he remained until his retirement in 1945. In 1929 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London and was later made a Corresponding Member of the French Academy of Agriculture and a Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was President of the Royal Entomological Society of London in 1936-37.

Imms was a man of fine character, a hard, careful and accurate worker with an unusual endowment of strong common sense. He died in a little over four years after his retirement after a painful illness, whose serious nature he carefully concealed in order to avoid distressing his family.

Professor Filippo Silvestri, was born in Bevagna, in the province of Perugia, Italy, on June 22, 1873 and died in the same place on June 10, 1949 just before completing his 76th year. According to my information, he continued to act as Director of the Entomological Laboratory in Portici, Naples, until the age of 75. At the International Congress in Stockholm, in August of last year, he presented a long and valuable paper on problems of biological control.

Silvestri was a man of strong and genial personality and immense energy: perhaps, indeed, the most remarkable entomologist of his generation. Following in the steps of Antonio Berlese, but with extremely meagre resources, he succeeded, almost single-handed, in making Portici recognized as one of the great world centres of entomological work. By exchanges obtained with the Bulletin published by his laboratory and to which he was the principal contributor, he

built up an excellent local library. His own contributions covered an immense field in both pure and applied entomology. He worked specifically on Chilopods, Thysanura, Protura, Isoptera, Embioptera, Psocoptera, and Strepsiptera and incidentally on many other groups. The discovery of the Protura and the Zoraptera was due to him. He was one of the earliest students of polyembryony and the first to reveal (in Litomastix) the existence of the remarkable asexual larvae sometimes formed during this process. He was not an experimentalist in the modern sense; but his monographs of injurious insects and their natural enemies contain a wealth of morphological and anatomical information and are abundantly and excellently illustrated. Silvestri had also a deep interest in biological control and carried out extensive explanations for parasites in many parts of the world, one of the most important being the search for parasites of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly (the account of which was translated at Silvestri's request by the present writer). Here again the results obtained singlehanded and with the most meagre equipment, were remarkable.

Only a man of exceptional mental capacity could have produced Silvestri's scientific output. But he had also, like Berlese, an extraordinary capacity for continuous hard work. The working day, in the period I spent in the Portici Laboratory, extended from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., with two hours interval for lunch. No member of the staff was allowed to deviate from this tempo. My sojourn in Portici dissipated once and for all, the common American illusion that Italy is poor because the Italians are lazy.

The scientific achievements of F. Silvestri were widely recognized. He was a member of the Pontifical Academy of Science, of the ancient Academy of the Lincei and a foreign and honorary member of some 30 foreign academies and societies. He was also, throughout his career, in spite of his distinctions, a kind, hospitable and friendly gentleman.

W. R. Thompson.

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