

OBITUARY NOTICE.

RAI BAHADUR GOURIPATI CHATTERJEE, M.Sc., F.N.I.

Rai Bahadur Gouripati Chatterjee, M.Sc., F.N.I., was the fourth son of the late Ashutosh Chatterjee, the premier stevedore of Calcutta. He was a descendant of an ancient Brahmin family of Mahesh (District Hooghly) with great Sanskrit culture and tradition. He was born at Calcutta on the 4th March, 1892. With continuous ill-health from his infancy he received his early education in the Bangabasi Collegiate School from where he passed the Entrance Examination in the year 1909, securing a Second Grade Scholarship. On account of serious meningitis and acute myopia he was seriously handicapped in his studies, but he passed the Intermediate Examination in Science from the Presidency College in the First Division in the year 1911. His health broke down almost completely and he could not sit for his B.Sc. Examination for three years successively and the doctors advised him to discontinue further studies. For the sake of his health his brothers suggested that he should join their stevedoring business, but on account of his indomitable will to carry on with scientific studies he could not persuade himself to take up a business career with bright financial prospects. He sat for his B.Sc. Examination against doctors' advice and passed it with distinction in the year 1916. His health further deteriorated and he could not appear at the M.Sc. Examination until 1919 when he got a First Class First in Physics and was awarded the University of Calcutta Gold Medal and Matilal Mullick Gold Medal. After getting his M.Sc. degree he worked as a research scholar in the Presidency College where he repaired many delicate scientific instruments for the college laboratory. This mechanical and scientific talent of his was highly appreciated by his various professors and he was selected for the post of a scientific assistant in the Indian Meteorological Department and joined the Upper Air Observatory at Agra on the 15th April, 1921. He was appointed Meteorologist from the 28th February, 1922 and became the Meteorologist-in-Charge from the 1st April, 1928 with a special allowance. In 1929 he went as the head of an upper air expedition to Jhinkargacha, District Jessore. In this expedition he did a lot of upper air investigations by letting off special balloons for the exploration of upper air. He contributed a paper on 'Some Upper Air Instruments for investigating the Lower Layers of the Earth's Atmosphere' for publication in the festival number in honour of Prof. Koppen's 85th birthday in 'Gerlands Beiträge Zur Geophysik', and on receipt of this paper Prof. Dr. Conrad expressed the opinion that his methods for sounding the lower layers of the earth's atmosphere will no doubt be used also in Europe in future, before all at the Air Mail Service. In 1930 the Agra University started a Meteorology course in M.Sc. and he was selected as its Professor of

Meteorology. He was awarded the Silver Jubilee Medal in 1935 and the Coronation Medal in 1937. He became the Superintending Meteorologist from the 1st October, 1938 and was made a Rai Bahadur on the 1st January, 1939. He was a highly resourceful, practical and experimental meteorologist and a creator of some of the most ingenious, delicate and yet serviceable and accurate instruments for upper air research. He took charge of the small observatory workshop and office at Agra from Mr. Field (the then Director-General of Observatories) in 1924 and later of the large headquarters in New Delhi with over 40 upper air observatories providing all the data that war conditions demand of them. His achievement during the last 18 years of his life is a proof of his ability in skilful and thorough planning and direction, and of his unfailing care, enthusiasm, determination and devotion.

In his school days his recreation was painting and his portrait painting was recognised by many a connoisseur to be of a very high order. Always straight-forward and generous in his behaviour he led a very simple life. He sacrificed his personal comforts and even necessities in order to help the poor. He was widely read and his knowledge of Economics and Horticulture was remarkable. Although a born scientist, he believed that agriculture must eventually play a vital part in the Indian national life. He had a creative urge in him and, being a bachelor with no encumbrances, he decided to give his best to develop a farm and nursery on the most up-to-date scientific lines. With this purpose he acquired extensive lands in the village Rohta in the district of Agra and laid the foundation of what was to become a unique institution, where he wanted to educate the children of the soil so that they may take to scientific farming which he believed would bring about the economic salvation of India for the coming generations. But God willed it otherwise. On the 1st June, 1942 he underwent an operation on account of an abscess on his foot and it was discovered that he was a victim of diabetes in an advanced stage. In spite of the best efforts of the doctors he expired on the 10th July, 1942.

N. K. S.