OBITUARY NOTE

DR. G. D. BHALERAO, D.Sc. (Lond. et Alld.)

The sudden death of Dr. G. D. Bhalerao, due to heart failure, on the 6th of December 1948, has deprived India of one of its enthusiastic investigators in the field of helminthological research. He was only 51 at the time of his death.

Dr. Bhalerao was born on the 10th of December 1897 at Wardha and received his early school education in his home town. He then migrated to Hislop College, Nagpur, and obtained the B.Sc. degree of the University of Allahabad in 1920. There were no arrangements for higher studies at Nagpur in Zoology in those days. He, therefore, went to join the Muir Central College, Allahabad, to work under Dr. W. N. F. Woodland and took the M.Sc. degree in Zoology. He was a conscientious devotee to the cause of scientific research and in order to widen his outlook he went abroad in 1935. While in England, he joined the School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, and worked under the distinguished guidance of the leading Helminthologist, Professor R. T. Leiper, F.R.S., now Director, Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Parasitology, at St. Albans and obtained the Ph.D. and later the D.Sc. from the University of London. He also obtained a D.Sc. degree of the University of Allahabad.

Dr. Bhalerao was interested in teaching and soon after his M.Sc. degree he was selected for an appointment as a lecturer in Biology at Hislop College, Nagpur. Subsequently he served successively on the staff of the University College, Rangoon (Burma) and College of Science, Nagpur. It was at Rangoon that he came in contact with Professor F. J. Meggitt who moulded his career and created his interest for research in Helminthology. He published his first few papers on the Trematode Parasites of Vertebrates under the guidance of his chief. His enthusiasm for helminthological research was likely to grow under suitable conditions and he little knew that it would result in a change of his profession. In 1930, he finally gave up teaching Zoology and accepted the post of a Helminthologist at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Mukteswar, Kumaon Hills, U.P., which institution he served till his death. Here he had ample opportunities to carry on researches in his favourite subject. There was a huge collection of helminth materials received from all over the country and library and laboratory facilities which could not be had at any place, not only in the country but perhaps in the east. It was best equipped for research. Under such favourable conditions he devoted himself wholeheartedly to research in helminthology. As a result of his investigations on the collection at Mukteswar, he published several papers describing new forms and gave a revised diagnosis of
those forms that were already known. Finally, in 1935, he published a valuable Monograph on the "Helminth Parasites of Domesticated Animals in India," which work he was, at the time of his death, revising for a second edition under the directions of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Needless to say that this monograph is widely used by the investigators in the veterinary departments of the country. Although it has its inherent defects in lacking suitable keys, it is also used by the beginners in helminthological studies at the Universities as one of the books of references.

In 1938, Dr. Bhalerao was entrusted with the arduous task of compiling the "Fauna of British India Volume on Trematoda," a work for which he had amassed an enormous collection of material and literature. I understand this work, at the time of his death, was in a fairly advanced stage of preparation. He had made voluminous index cards with figures and descriptions of the various genera and species already known and also brief summaries of the new forms which he intended to describe. It will, therefore, be in the fitness of things if the authorities recognise the work of his several years' labour and pass it on to a senior helminthologist in the country so that the wealth of knowledge obtained and discovered by Bhalerao may be suitably collated.

Ever since his appointment in 1930, Dr. Bhalerao had been connected with the Indian Institute of Veterinary Research, where he occupied severally the positions of a Helminthologist, an Officer-in-charge of the Veterinary Zoology and at the time of the partition of India, as Officiating Director of the said Institute. He carried out all his duties on these posts with conspicuous success and always earned approbation from his superiors.

Dr. Bhalerao was a member of several scientific societies and Government committees. He presided over the Zoology section of the Indian Science Congress in 1947 and subsequently was the President of the Medical and Veterinary Section of the same body in 1948. He thus attained a fairly eminent position in the scientific field in the country.

Dr. Bhalerao had a thorough knowledge of the systematic Helminthology. He was particularly interested in the field of Veterinary Helminthology which he expressed in his numerous original researches published in various journals, foreign and Indian (A list of his published researches is appended). In one of his contributions, Dr. Bhalerao reports the occurrence of Schistosoma japonicum from pigs in India. If this is correct there seems to be a danger of the spread of this infection to man, as it is transmitted to man through the intermediary snail host in China and Japan and may possibly infect man here also. A note of warning must, therefore, be given to those