

our own natural minimum or maximum potentiality. It is this modifiable or extensible aspect which, contributing to the individual differences, found among men and women of mature and late age provides the most practically controllable and definitely trustworthy psychological insurance and affords the most probable prospect of mental longevity.

I therefore conclude by quoting the closing sentence in the paper of 1896 by Cattell and Farrand,<sup>21</sup>

"There is no scientific problem more important than the study of the development of man, and no practical problem more urgent than the application of our knowledge to guide this development." The study of man in maturity shows that his psychological progress is not bound utterly to the lowest level of his physiological decline. Through appropriate training and practise, continued mental elasticity and organized effective control, may extend mental longevity.

## OBITUARY

### NATHANIEL LORD BRITTON<sup>1</sup>

THE Board of Managers of The New York Botanical Garden desires to place on record the following minute in regard to the passing of Nathaniel Lord Britton, which occurred on June 25, 1934:

The history of The New York Botanical Garden is inseparably interwoven with the name of Dr. Nathaniel Lord Britton. In originating and developing the idea of a great institution in the City of New York, to be devoted to the study of the plant sciences and to the public display of plants and plant products of scientific, economic and horticultural interest, the time and the place most fortunately met the man who possessed the rare qualities that could guide this ambitious undertaking to distinguished success. Making a definite start with an act of the state legislature in 1891, incorporating The New York Botanical Garden, the project was steadily advanced until in 1895 the \$250,000 required under this act for its initial endowment had been raised by subscription, the Commissioners of Public Parks had set aside for the purpose 250 acres of land in Bronx Park (afterwards increased to 400 acres), and the Board of Estimate had appropriated \$500,000 for the erection of suitable buildings. During all this period of preliminary organization, Dr. Britton, with able associates, was the motivating spirit. A board of managers had already been elected, with Cornelius Vanderbilt as president, Andrew Carnegie as vice-president, J. Pierpont Morgan as treasurer, and N. L. Britton as secretary. Seth Low, president of Columbia University, accepted the chairmanship of the scientific directors, and an affiliation between Columbia University and the Botanical Garden was arranged. On June 17, 1896, Dr. Britton was elected director-in-chief of the garden, a post that he held with unflagging energy for a little more than thirty-three years. Retaining a connection with Columbia University as professor emeritus, he

soon exhibited an altogether remarkable ability in combining the qualities of a technical research worker with those of a practical administrator and a successful author of scientific books. Dr. Britton soon perceived that the West Indies and Central America offered a largely untouched field for exploration by systematic botanists as compared with the northeastern United States. He participated personally in no less than thirty expeditions to the West Indies, mostly at his own expense. The results of Dr. Britton's studies are recorded in very numerous publications, of which some of the principal ones are the "Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada" (three volumes—with Judge Addison Brown), the "Manual of the Flora of the Northern States and Canada," "North American Trees" (with Dr. J. A. Shafer), the "Flora of Bermuda," "The Bahama Flora" (with Dr. C. F. Millspaugh), "The Cactaceae" (four volumes—with Dr. J. N. Rose), the "Botany of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands" (two volumes, with Mr. Percy Wilson) and several important contributions to the "North American Flora." Dr. Britton was the leader in organizing and developing the "Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands," of which five volumes of the projected eighteen and eighteen parts of other volumes had been published at the time of his death. To this remarkable record of scientific achievement in the way of printed pages must be added the constructive leadership that resulted in a little more than a third of a century in building out of raw materials one of the leading botanical institutions of the world. In grateful recognition of the eminent services of Dr. Britton the Board of Managers adopts the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That the Managers of the New York Botanical Garden deeply deplore their loss in the death of Doctor Nathaniel Lord Britton, their Secretary from March 21, 1895, to August 1, 1929, and Director-in-Chief of the Garden from June 17, 1896, to August 1, 1929. Doctor Britton combined to a remarkable degree the social, administrative, and scientific qualities that were

<sup>21</sup> J. McK. Cattell and L. Farrand. "Physical and Mental Measurements of the Students of Columbia University." *Psychol. Rev.*, 3: 618-648, 1896.

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Managers of the New York Botanical Garden and of the Council of the New York Academy of Sciences.

requisite for the development of an institution of the kind proposed, and his success in little more than thirty-three years in placing The New York Botanical Garden in the forefront of similar establishments fully justified the wisdom of the choice. It is doubtful if any one else could have been found who would or could have attained similar eminent success in the existing circumstances. The New York Botanical Garden is, in a very real sense, a living monument to Nathaniel Lord Britton. Possibly his printed pages may endure even longer.

*Resolved*, That the foregoing preamble and resolution be entered on the official minutes of the Board of Managers and that copies thereof be sent to the surviving brother and sister of Doctor Britton, with assurances of profound sympathy in their bereavement.

The Council of the New York Academy of Sciences desires to place on record the following minute in regard to Nathaniel Lord Britton, whose death occurred on June 25, 1934:

Dr. Nathaniel Lord Britton was one of the oldest and most active members of the New York Academy of Sciences, having been elected to membership in 1880, at the early age of 21 years, and becoming fellow in 1884, patron in 1901, president in 1906 and 1907 and benefactor in 1918. In December, 1890, he proposed to the council a plan for the alliance of the numerous special scientific societies that had grown up in New York, and a few months later the Scientific Alliance of New York was fully organized. Sixteen years later the component societies of the alliance were affiliated with the academy. In spite of his absorbing duties for thirty-three years as the first director-in-chief of The New York Botanical Garden and his tireless activities as author of many voluminous works on botanical science, he always maintained a keen interest in the work of the academy and gave freely of his time and means to its support. In December, 1915, he suggested to the council the celebration, in 1917, of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Lyceum of Natural History, the forerunner of the academy. Owing to the involvement of the United States in the world war, the ambitious plan for such a celebration was modified and partly abandoned, but there remained a Centennial Fund for the endowment of the academy, to which fund he was the largest contributor. In 1913, largely under the leadership of Dr. Britton, a proposition for a scientific survey of Porto Rico was approved by the council and a special committee of five, with himself as chairman, was appointed to organize and develop the project. The scope of this survey was later extended to include the Virgin Islands. At the time of his death, five of the contemplated eighteen volumes of the reports of the scientific survey, together with eighteen parts of uncompleted volumes, had appeared. Nothing comparable has ever been published for any

other of the West Indian Islands. The cost of the publication of the botanical volumes of these reports was underwritten by Dr. Britton himself. His personal popularity in political and educational circles on the island was in a large measure responsible for generous appropriations by the Government of Porto Rico for defraying the costs of other volumes.

In his last will and testament, Dr. Britton gave final proof of his devotion to the work of the academy by bequeathing to it, without conditions, a one twelfth share in his residuary estate.

In grateful recognition of the loyalty of Dr. Britton to the New York Academy of Sciences, the council adopts the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That in the passing of Doctor Nathaniel Lord Britton, the New York Academy of Sciences has lost one of its most eminent members and one whose constructive leadership will be greatly missed, even though his foresight and devotion have assured that his generous support of scientific research and publication will long continue. And

*Resolved*, That the foregoing preamble and these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of the Council and that copies thereof be sent to the surviving sister and brother, with assurances of the deep sympathy of the Council in their bereavement.

#### RECENT DEATHS

GEORGE ANSON HAMILTON, of New Jersey, an honorary and charter member of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and a retired consulting engineer of the Western Electric Company of New York, died on January 10, at the age of ninety-one years.

EDWARD C. HOLTON, chief chemist for the Sherwin-Williams Paint Company, died on November 30, at the age of sixty-nine years.

DR. ROBERT C. BURDETTE, associate entomologist for the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers University, a member of the station's staff since 1928, died on January 6, at the age of thirty-six years.

DR. FREDERICK AUGUSTUS DIXEY, formerly bursar and lecturer of Wadham College, Oxford, and curator of the Hope entomological collections, died on January 17, at the age of eighty years.

PROFESSOR GRANDCLAUDE, the assistant director of the Cancer Clinic of the Northern Departments at Lille, died of blood poisoning contracted in his hospital work on December 26, at the age of forty-three years.

PROFESSOR CHIYOMATSU ISHIKAWA, honorary professor of zoology at the Tokyo Imperial University, died at the age of seventy-four years on January 17, in Taihoku, Formosa, Japan.