

**Colonel Henry Halcro Johnston, C.B., C.B.E., D.L., D.Sc.,
M.D., C.M., F.L.S.**

HENRY HALCRO JOHNSTON, the fifth son of James Johnston of Coubister, Orphir, Orkney, was born on September 13, 1856, and died on October 18, 1939. He received his early education at Dollar Academy and at the Edinburgh Collegiate School. Entering the University of Edinburgh he completed his medical course and subsequently attended the Army Medical School at Netley. He joined the Army Medical Department in 1881. As a student at Edinburgh he was particularly prominent as an athlete and represented his University at various sports. Tall in stature and with a powerful physique he was eminent as a hammer thrower and took his place on the rugby international field for Scotland against England and Ireland in 1877. His first service overseas was in 1885 at Suakin. He then spent the years 1887-90 at Mauritius, and after transference to India took part in the Malakand and Buner Expeditions in the North-West Frontier during the years 1897-98. For service in South Africa, 1899-1902, he was awarded the honour C.B. He was promoted Colonel in 1911 and retired two years later, but almost immediately he was on duty again from 1914-19 as Deputy Director of Medical Services at Gibraltar and subsequently as Assistant Director of Medical Services for the Western District of Scotland and for the Northern Command, England. At the conclusion of the war he received the honour C.B.E. On his final retirement he resided chiefly in Orkney and was a Deputy Lieutenant for the county.

Throughout his career abroad and in the midst of his normal duties Colonel Johnston was keenly interested in the flora of the various countries in which he campaigned, and took the opportunity of making collections of herbarium material as well as seeds. His interest was chiefly in these collections and not in the writing of papers. He, however, published from time to time botanical notes particularly on the flora of Mauritius and on the flora of the Orkney and Shetland Islands. Most of his contributions are to be found in the *Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh*. It was only in 1919 that he was able to give himself up almost wholly to botanical studies. His chief pursuit was a most careful scrutiny of the flora of the Orkney Islands. In addition to a most exact

enumeration of the present flora, he examined all earlier records and did his best either to confirm or to disprove such as were doubtful. His own knowledge of the vegetation of every one of the Orkney Islands was particularly complete and it is unlikely that any other county in the British Isles has been examined with the same amount of detail. He was scrupulously exact in his methods, and his notes on the flora are a model of accuracy and of care. His extensive collections from his native county were gifted by him to the custody of the Orkney Museum. It was his practice to submit the majority of his specimens to careful scrutiny by experts in each family or genus, and his records consequently can be regarded as very dependable. The rest of his collections with the valuable notes attached were bequeathed by him to the Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden.

Colonel Johnston retained his mental and bodily vigour until on the verge of his eightieth year, and it was only during the last three years that he was prevented by illness from continuing his personal expeditions into every island of the group. He was unmarried.

He was elected a Fellow in 1895.

W. W. S