

## OBITUARY

**Arthur William Hill, 1875-1942.**

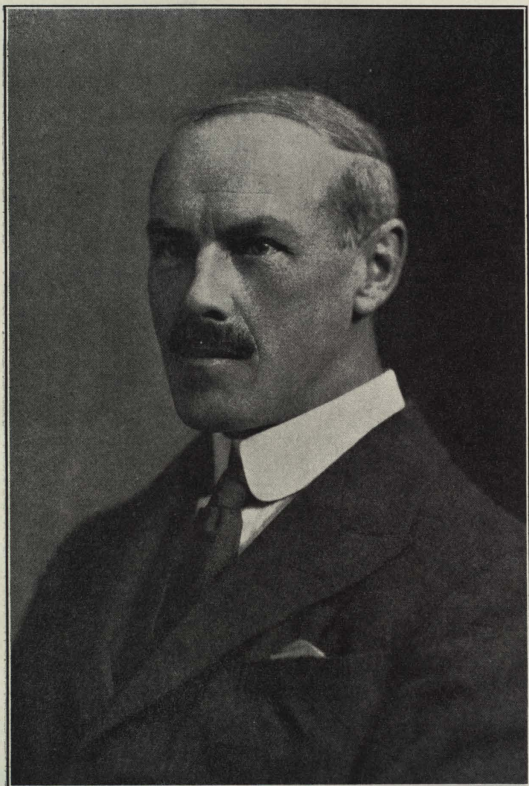
THE long association of Sir Arthur Hill with Kew came abruptly and tragically to an end by an accident when he was taking his customary morning ride. His death, coming at a time when his wide knowledge and administrative abilities were so much needed, will be grievously felt, not alone at Kew and in Great Britain, but throughout the Empire. For Hill was truly the leader of official botany, felt as such in the Dominions as well as in the Homeland, and his sagacious advice on problems submitted to him will be sadly missed.

The only son of Daniel Hill, of Watford, he was born on October 11, 1875, and educated at Marlborough College, where his innate interest in natural history was drawn out by his classical master, the late Edward Meyrick, F.R.S. Hill went on to King's College, Cambridge, of which he came to love every nook and corner. He became a Fellow in 1901, and was very proud of his Honorary Fellowship, awarded in 1932. At Cambridge the lines of his work were greatly influenced by Marshall Ward and later Walter Gardiner, who encouraged that taste for morphology shown in many subsequent papers.

His travels began early, with a visit to Iceland as a member of the Bisiker expedition. In 1903 he was in the high Andes of Peru and Bolivia, an experience that coloured the rest of his botanical career. There was awakened the interest in cushion plants that never left him, and resulted in several important papers. When, later, he reached the summit of Alec's Knob in Westland, he immediately pounced with delight on *Phyllachne* as a worthy subject for study.

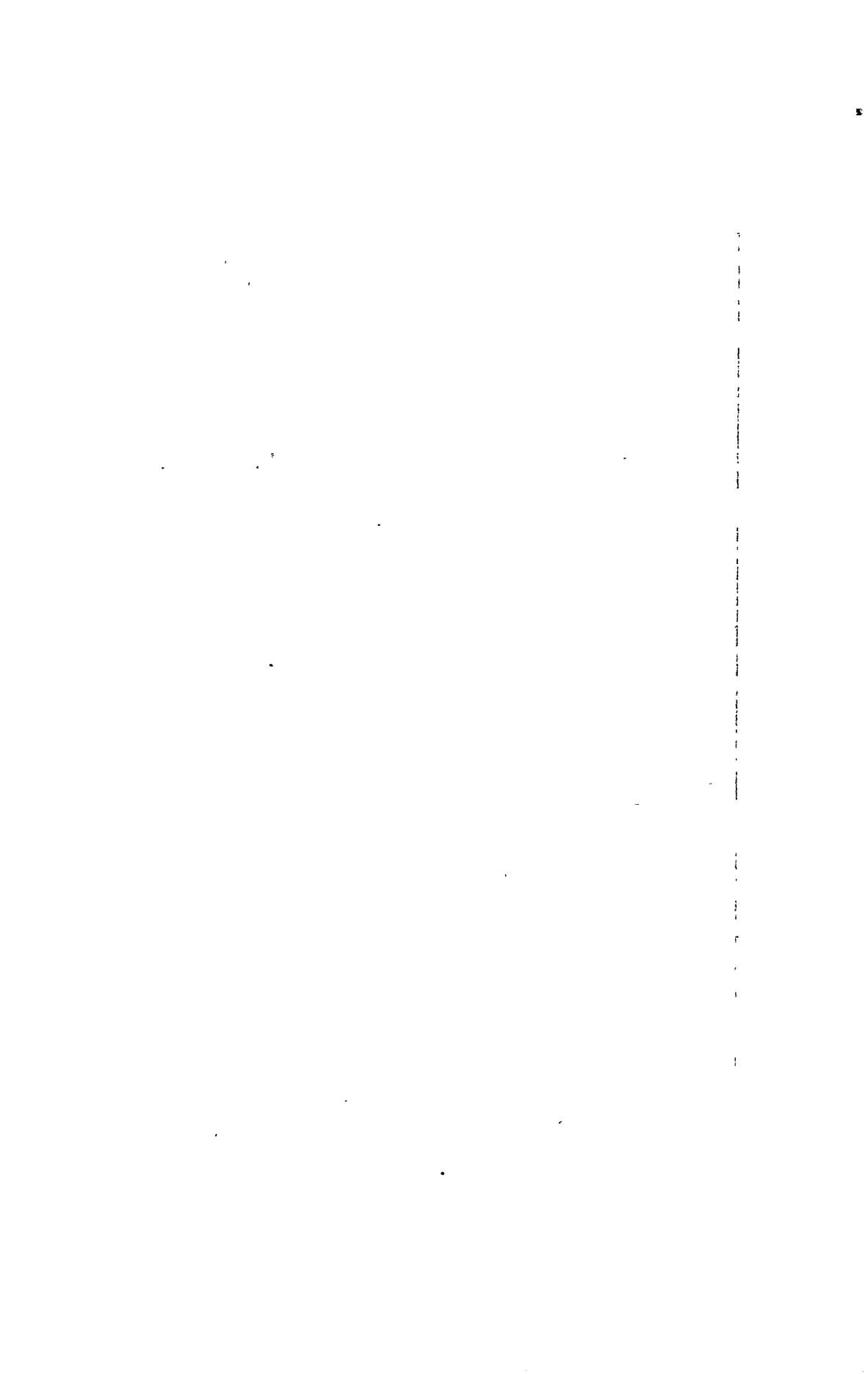
In 1907 he joined Sir David Prain's staff at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, as Assistant Director. Besides his routine duties, Hill then commenced his contributions to the various "Kew" floras, especially those of Africa and India, and dealt with several difficult families. In 1922 he succeeded Prain as Director. Thanks to grants from the Empire Marketing Board, he was able to extend the activities of Kew in many ways. Especially, he was able to revive the practice of sending-out trained botanists to various countries, and himself visited Australia, New Zealand, Malaya, Rhodesia, East Africa, India, Cyrenaica, and the West Indies. Very fruitful connections resulted from all these visits.

Hill was no mere herbarium man, but took full interest in the gardens themselves and was able to effect many important improvements. His whole-hearted support of economic botany, an outstanding feature of Kew, is revealed in his Presidential Address to Section K of the British Association in 1930, under the title "Present-day Problems in Taxonomic and Economic Botany." "He held the balance," the keeper of the Herbarium, Mr. A. D. Cotton, says, "almost perfectly between the interests of the Gardens and those



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of the Herbarium, Museums, and Laboratory, while the versatility of his nature made him capable of taking interest in every aspect of the Gardens' administration."

He rendered fine service also to the Royal Horticultural Society and the John Innes Horticultural Institution, while he was ever ready to help in any movement where botanical knowledge was required, notably any project for the preservation of the natural flora and vegetation. It was in recognition of his high standing and eminent services that Sir Arthur was elected an Honorary Member of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 1928.

No player of games, Hill was never happier than when on horseback, nor will visitors to his home easily forget his delight in his small private old-world garden, where he loved to seek peace and quiet after the labours of the day. Greatly interested in church architecture, he was also a devout churchman, and many can testify to the help given them unobtrusively and gladly by Hill. In the midst of administrative duties he could still fit in some botanical research, and at the time of his death he was engaged on a revision of *Noto-triche*. The Gardens were a hobby as well as a duty, and he had in hand a detailed history of them. Hill will be sorely missed when the world returns again from destructive to constructive work.

The visit of Sir Arthur to New Zealand in January, 1928, will remain a vivid memory to those who met him. They will recall the boyishness that kept peeping out from the rather stiff official manner, the glow on his face when he returned from his many rides, the delight with which he squatted in quite unofficial manner to gaze on some plant that attracted his attention, the joy he had in watching from the depths of his armchair Cockayne C. arguing with Cockayne A., for argument's sake. In more serious vein one recalls the shrewd, critical comments thrown into any discussion. One watched, too, scepticism turning into doubt, changing into acceptance, ending in enthusiasm, as the then heterodox views on natural hybridism were expounded and demonstrated.

As a result of his experiences, Hill in 1929 lectured before the Linnean Society on wild hybrids in New Zealand, and in 1935, with Burt, published a paper on the genera *Gaultheria* and *Pernettya* in New Zealand, Tasmania, and Australia. Other papers of particular interest to New Zealand botanists are his revision of *Lilacopsis*, and of *Caltha* in the southern hemisphere, and his "Antarctica and Problems in Geographical Distribution."

At the end of his visit to New Zealand, Hill presented a "Report on Matters of Botanical Interest in New Zealand." As this pregnant report has not received the full attention it deserves, it is well to repeat in summary form the views expressed. His main points were (1) that a Dominion National Botanic Garden should be established under a director who should be a good systematic botanist with a keen interest in horticulture. This garden, he suggested, should be in one of the main centres, with subordinate gardens in other centres, all under the one control ("One of the main difficulties in considering the question of a Dominion Botanic Garden is that Botanic

Gardens *do not exist* in New Zealand except in title and by Act of Parliament ”); (2) that there should be a main Dominion Herbarium under the charge of a Keeper of the Botanical Department of the Museum in which it was housed, assisted by an adequate staff; (3) that a Professorship of Botany should be established at one of the centres, and that good botanical posts should be made available, so that there could be “a flow of younger men to carry on the good work which has been done in the past by distinguished New Zealand botanists ”; (4) that a liaison officer should be sent to Kew periodically, as has been done by Africa, India; and Australia; (5) that the National and Scenic Reserves, which very greatly impressed him, should be in some way connected with the Director of Botanic Gardens.

Under a somewhat chill and formal exterior, Hill carried a genial and kindly heart. He would with as much zest demonstrate to a raw colonial how to roll a “broolly” as how to marshal his data for a paper. A visitor to Kew, provided he came to work and showed a proper respect for “the hub of the Empire,” would receive the fullest help and encouragement. From Banks to Hill, Kew has had its great directors, and Hill is not the least of these. He never lost the love of the classics derived from his Marlborough days, and was apt in quotation from his favourite Latin authors: *Atque in perpetuam, frater, ave atque vale!*

H. H. ALLAN.