

Sir Arnold Theiler

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SIR ARNOLD THEILER.

Under "Notes and Gleanings" (Jan. 14th) we referred to this distinguished compatriot of ours, and it has been suggested to us that this should be supplemented by a few biographical particulars:—

Sir Arnold Theiler, whose family belongs to Hasle (Lucerne), was born on March 26th, 1867 in Frick (Aargau), where his father was rector at the county school. From the local schools he went to the cantonal school in Aarau and afterwards studied veterinary science at Zurich and Berne, at which latter university he obtained his doctor's degree, having previously qualified as veterinary surgeon at Zurich. In 1891 he emigrated to South Africa and opened a private practice in Pretoria. His discovery of a serum for the successful treatment of the rinderpest secured him in 1896 the official appointment of Vet. Surgeon under the South African Republic; after the Boer War in 1900 he was nominated Govt. Vet. Bacteriologist of the new Colony, and later on (1910) Director of Veterinary Research. Author of many publications on tropical diseases of domesticated animals, his services have been recognised by numerous distinctions. In 1914 he was elected D.Sc. (h.c.) of Cape University and made a Knight Commander of St. Michael & George (K.C.M.G.), the C.M.G. having been conferred upon him already in 1907; he is an Hon. Assoc. of the Royal College of Vet. Surgeons of England. At present, whilst Director of Vet. Education and Research, Sir Arnold is Professor of Pathology in the Faculty of Vet. Science of the Transvaal University College in Pretoria.

We also have pleasure in publishing below an appreciation from a London correspondent:—

To the Editor *The Swiss Observer*.

Sir,—I was very pleased indeed to read in *The Swiss Observer* of January 14th your notes on our illustrious compatriot Sir Arnold Theiler, and according to your request I am delighted to give you a few of my recollections concerning Sir Arnold.

At the present moment, when there is such a serious outbreak of cattle disease here in England, it is of special importance to us Swiss people to remember and to be proud of the achievements which our great countryman, Sir Arnold Theiler, has to his credit. The services which he has rendered to the Transvaal, to South Africa in particular and to the world in general, with his eminent scientific researches and discoveries are world-famous. His name will live for ever in connection with the great remedies he has been fortunate enough to discover.

The eminent success he has achieved with his various serums for cattle diseases as well as for horse sickness are a great tribute to his infinite and untiring researches and labours; and his perfect knowledge of the sciences of Pathology and Bacteriology, which he has acquired during his many years of hard work, have made him a world authority, not only in this particular branch, but in Veterinary Science generally.

Only those who realise of what vital importance the health of his live stock is to a farmer can imagine the far-reaching importance of Sir Arnold's discoveries.

He has prepared and administered successfully various serums for almost all the cattle diseases, the most ravaging of them being Rinderpest, Rhodesian Red Water Fever, and Anthrax.

Sir Arnold is an untiring worker and has devoted almost his entire life to his research work. Not only has he made successful and most elaborate researches and studies in his laboratories and worked for many strenuous years without relaxation for the attainment of his ideals, but he has faced all the perils and dangers of various expeditions to extend and complete his studies on the animals of the vast plains and the wilds of Central Africa.

All those who are familiar with South Africa know

what he has done in connection with that most treacherous disease called Horse Sickness, and the eminent success he has been fortunate enough to achieve have benefited the Union of South Africa at large and thousands and thousands of struggling farmers in particular.

Besides all his scientific work, Sir Arnold supervised and directed the erection and equipment of the New Institution and Laboratories for Research on Cattle Disease at Ouderstepoort in the neighbourhood of Pretoria. Many of the most ingenious devices to be found there are Sir Arnold's own invention. He gave all his knowledge and experience and tireless effort in every direction to the successful realisation of his life's ideal.

I am very pleased, indeed, to be one of those of his countrymen who have seen the splendid results and success he has obtained, and can testify to the universal admiration in which he is held in South Africa.

Besides the eminent services Sir Arnold has rendered in the sphere of science, he is a charming man and very pleasant companion. The first time I had the privilege of meeting him was when we both attended the funeral of President Kruger as delegates of the Swiss Societies of Johannesburg and Pretoria in 1904. The remains of the late President, having been brought from Switzerland, where he died, were buried in Pretoria quite close to the house in which he used to live whilst President of the Transvaal.

At that time Dr. Theiler, as he then was, lived in Daasport, quite close to Pretoria, and his house was open to all and sundry who cared to go and see him. He used to take us over his large Government depots and was untiring in explaining anything we cared to ask about and in which we took special interest. He would sometimes come into Pretoria and spend a happy evening at the Club, if his time allowed him to do so, and he was jolly and natural and joined in all the merriment going on. Happy times they were for all of us.

Sir Arnold was particularly kind-hearted towards his countrymen, and no Swiss worthy of the name called on him for advice or material help in vain. During the Boer War Dr. Theiler helped and advised many a member of the Swiss Colony, and to several of them he gave employment, to others pecuniary assistance to tide them over the bad times.

Many years ago Sir Arnold had an unfortunate accident which cost him one of his hands and part of the arm. He has therefore one artificial arm and hand, which he uses with great deftness. Besides most of the typical Swiss characteristics he possesses a very pronounced *aversion to publicity or ostentation*.

Sir Arnold's enduring monument is the signal service which his life-work has rendered to mankind.

THEOPHILE SCHAEERER,

Formerly Consulting Architect to the Victoria Fall and Transvaal Power Co. and to A. E. G. Berlin at Johannesburg.

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