

OBITUARIES

DR. P. D. STRACHAN

The death of Dr. P. D. Strachan on June 6, 1941, at Alice, Cape Province, writes a contributor to the *South African Medical Journal*, will be a great sorrow to all who knew him well. The distinguished son of a remarkable father, who practically educated his sons in classics and mathematics before they entered Glasgow University, Dr. Strachan was a born mathematician and distinguished himself in that subject at the university, where he took his M.A. in 1894, after which he studied medicine and graduated in 1898.

For some years he practiced in Scotland and then, in 1901, he went to South Africa with the Imperial Forces, settling after the war in Philippolis, Orange Free State. Serving there as district surgeon, he identified Malta fever and was awarded a gold medal for his thesis on the subject for the degree of M.D. He returned to Scotland in 1914, where he was employed in military service during the Great War.

In 1921 he returned to South Africa and entered the colonial service in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, from which he was later transferred to Basutoland. There he served for many years as Medical Superintendent of the asylum for leprosy patients at Maseru. He retired about four years ago and was soon after appointed lecturer on anatomy and physiology in Fort Clare College, at Alice.

Dr. Strachan was not only a man of great intellectual ability, but modest and lovable to a degree, exceptionally generous and unselfish. Like so many of his philosophic and unworldly temperament, however, his success fell far short of that which falls to many men who in instinct, talent, and character could not be compared with him.

To this tribute is added one by the editor of the periodical referred to. Dr. Strachan's intense concentration on his work in Basutoland, which could almost be described as missionary work, kept him from frequent contact with his colleagues elsewhere. His interest in other activities, however, was acute. He often wrote to call attention to editorial lapses; he held that "a doctor should be able to write his own language correctly." The editor of THE JOURNAL can subscribe to this indication of Dr. Strachan's friendly helpfulness in this and other ways.