Bothalia 9, 2: 251–253.

Ethel Mary Doidge (1887-1965)

by

M. D. Gunn

Ethel Mary Doidge, who died on 22nd September, 1965, at Anerley, South Coast, Natal, occupied a leading place for almost forty years as a research worker in the field of plant bacteriology, pathology, and systematic mycology.

She was born of Methodist stock at Nottingham, England, on 31st May, 1887. Her father, Henry Doidge, an analytical chemist, who died early, and his wife, Elizabeth Craven, came to Natal in 1897, with their young family and settled in Pietermaritzburg.

Ethel Doidge was educated at Epworth High School, Pietermaritzburg, and Huguenot College, Wellington, Cape Province, where she received her early botanical training under Dr. Bertha Stoneman. Graduating in 1907 with distinctions in botany, she was awarded a scholarship at the University of the Cape of Good Hope, which she did not take up.

In 1908 her long association with the Public Service commenced when she was appointed as assistant to the Plant Pathologist and Mycologist in the Division of Botany, Transvaal Department of Agriculture, Pretoria, where pioneer work in plant pathology had begun three years earlier under Dr. I. B. Pole Evans. In 1909 she obtained the M.A. degree in botany, with special reference to mycology, from the University of the Cape of Good Hope. In the same year, the University awarded her the Cornwall and York prize for a research paper entitled " The flora of certain kaffir beers ". In 1912 she was appointed professional assistant in the Division of Botany and Mycology (the Union of South Africa Public Service) and in 1914 was awarded the degree of D.Sc. by the University of the Cape of Good Hope. The thesis dealt with "A bacterial disease of mango, *Bacillus mangiferae*, n.sp.", a previously undescribed disease which was then unknown outside South Africa and had for some years been causing considerable loss to mango growers in this Country.

Dr. Doidge was elected an F.L.S. in 1912 and supported the main South African scientific associations, in which she played an active part. She was a foundation member of the S.A. Biological Society, served on its council and was granted the Society's major award, the Senior Capt. Scott Memorial Medal in 1922 for her researches in plant pathology in South Africa. She joined the Royal Society of South Africa, of which she was elected a Fellow in 1915, and the S.A. Association for the Advancement of Science, becoming President of Section C in 1918. Her address on this occasion was entitled " The rôle of bacteria in plant diseases ". She was also appointed as a member of the first council of the University of South Africa. Dr. Doidge is commemorated in the name *Meliola doidgeae* Syd.

Her accomplishments were not confined to science, however, for she was interested in music and held two licentiate diplomas, the L.T.C.L. and U.P.L.M., for singing. For many years she was a member of the Pretoria Musical Society.

In 1929 she was appointed as Principal Plant Pathologist, a post which she held until her retirement in 1942 at the age of 55 years. Her services were retained for a further four years, during which time she rounded off her official career with a monumental work of 1094 pages: " The South African fungi and lichens ", published as Bothalia Vol. 5 (1950).

Commenting in the preface to this publication, Dr. I. B. Pole Evans, her former Chief, writes: " Dr. Doidge took up this study more than 35 years ago. She has made her impress on it and has left a record of it for which younger workers in years to come will never cease to thank her. The field for research in Mycology in this country is thus immense, but this Science rarely appeals to the average Administrator under whom much of the work usually falls. Its progress, therefore, must naturally be slow and far from encouraging. However, there are still some labourers in the field of Science whose only thought and ambition is to advance the knowledge of their particular subject for the general benefit of mankind, and in this Dr. Doidge has certainly succeeded. She has tirelessly paved the way and truly laid the foundation on which Mycology in Southern Africa will be built. Great things no doubt will come from the further study of African fungi and more that is new from Africa will still arrive, but come what may, future workers in this field will rightly appraise the value of Dr. Doidge's work ".

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

A list of her main scientific publications is given below, in addition to which she wrote over a hundred semi-popular papers relating to plant diseases.

1909. *The flora of certain kaffir beers.* Transv. Dept. Agric. Sci. Bull. No. 8.
1915a. A bacterial disease of the mango, *Bacillus mangifera,* n.sp. *Ann. Appl. Biol.* 2: 1–45.
1915b. Some notes on the South African Erysiphaceae. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 5: 237–245.
1915c. The South African mulberry blight, *Bacterium mori. Ann. Appl. Biol.* 2: 113–124.
1916a. On the occurrence of *Bacterium campestre* in South Africa. *S. Afr. J. Sci.* 11: 401–409.
1916b. *The origin and cause of citrus canker in South Africa.* Union Dept. Agric. Sci. Bull. No. 8.
1917a. The bacterial blight of pear blossoms occurring in South Africa. *Ann. Appl. Biol.* 4: 50–74.
1917b. A bacterial spot of citrus. *Ann. Appl. Biol.* 3: 52–80.
1917c. The Perisporiaceae. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 5: 713–750.
1919a. The rôle of plant diseases. *S. Afr. J. Sci.* 16: 65–92.
1919b. The bacterial blight of beans. *Bacterium phaseoli. S. Afr. J. Sci.* 15: 503–505.
1919c. Walnut bacteriosis. *S. Afr. J. Sci.* 15: 407–412.
1919d. Revisional notes. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 7: 193–198.
1920a. Notes on four species of *Meliola* hitherto unrecorded from South Africa. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 8: 107–110.
1920b. Notes on an interesting collection from Natal. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 2: 137–144.
1920c. *Meliolaster.* A new genus of the Microthyriaceae. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 8: 121–124.
1920d. Mycological notes. I. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 8: 117–120.
1920e. Some changes in the nomenclature of South African Ascomycetes. *S. Afr. J. Nat. Hist.* 2: 39–41.
1920f. South African Microthyriaceae. *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 8: 235–282.
1921a. A tomato canker. *Ann. Appl. Biol.* 7: 407–430.
1921b. The haustoria of the genera *Meliola* and *Irene. Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Afr.* 9: 117–127.
1921c. South African Ascomycetes in the National Herbarium. I. *Bothalia* 1: 5–32.
1922a. South African Ascomycetes in the National Herbarium. II. *Bothalia* 1: 65–82.
1922b. A fungus of economic importance on the avocado. *Bothalia* 1: 179–186.
1924a. South African Ascomycetes in the National Herbarium. III. *Bothalia* 1: 195–221.
1924b. A preliminary check list of plant diseases occurring in South Africa. *Mem. Bot. Surv. S. Afr.* No. 6, pp. 56.
1924c. The cause of citrus scab. *Trans. Brit. Mycol. Soc.* 10: 119–121. (With E. J. Butler).
1927a. South African Ascomycetes in the National Herbarium. IV. *Bothalia* 2: 229–241.
1927b. A preliminary study of the South African rust fungi. *Bothalia* 2: 1–228.
1928a. The South African species of the Meliolineae. *Bothalia* 2: 372–424. (With H. Sydow).

1928b. South African rust fungi. II. *Bothalia* 2: 473–474.

1929. *A study of some Alternarias affecting citrus in South Africa.* Union Dept. Agric. Sci. Bull. No. 69, pp. 27.

1931. A revised list of plant diseases occurring in South Africa. *Mem. Bot. Surv. S. Afr.* No. 11, pp. 78. (With A. M. Bottomley).

1936. *The fungi which causes rots in stored citrus fruits in South Africa.* Union Dept. Agric. & For. Sci. Bull. No. 162, pp. 23. (With J. E. van der Plank).

1938. Some South African Fusaria. *Bothalia* 3: 331–483.

1939. South African rust fungi. III. *Bothalia* 3: 487–512.

1941a. South African rust fungi. IV. *Bothalia* 4: 229–236.

1941b. Some South African Valsaceae. *Bothalia* 4: 47–74.

1941c. South African Ascomycetes in the National Herbarium. V. *Bothalia* 4: 193–217.

1942a. A revision of the South African Microthyriaceae. *Bothalia* 4: 273–420.

1942b. Revised descriptions of *Phyllachora* and related genera. *Bothalia* 4: 421–463.

1948a. South African rust fungi. V. *Bothalia* 4: 895–918.

1948b. South African rust fungi. VI. The species of *Uromyces* on Iridaceae. *Bothalia* 4: 919–937.

1948c. *Cercospora* species recorded from Southern Africa. *Bothalia* 4: 881–937. (With C. Chupp).

1950. The South African fungi and lichens to the end of 1945. *Bothalia* 5: 1–1094.