

THOMAS HERBERT ELLIOT JACKSON

T. H. E. Jackson, known to his many friends as Pinkie, was murdered by a criminal gang at his home near Kitale, Kenya, on the night of the 22nd of May, 1968.

Pinkie Jackson was born in England in 1903. He was educated at Wellington College, as it was the wish of his father, Brig-General H. K. Jackson, that he should eventually become a regular soldier. However, young Pinkie showed little inclination for the army and after Wellington, went to Harper Adams Agricultural College in Shropshire.

In 1923, after a brief visit to Kenya, he went to India to work on an indigo plantation owned by an uncle. The following year he returned to Kenya for good and after learning to grow coffee for a while with Mr. Maxwell Trench, near Nyeri, he settled on a farm on the slopes of Mt. Elgon, where he was soon joined by his father and family. Coffee had not been grown in that area before, but was eventually established by Pinkie and by his father, and after many vicissitudes the farm "Kapretwa" blossomed forth, to become one of the finest and most successful coffee estates in the district.

At the outbreak of war Pinkie joined the O.C.T.U. and was later drafted to the 4th King's African Rifles.

After some service in that regiment he was seconded to the administration of the Turkana district, where he was largely responsible for raising the "Turkana Irregulars". Later he was charged with the military administration of a large area in Northern Somalia and by the end of the war had reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

After the war Pinkie Jackson returned to Kapretwa, which he continued to improve and develop in subsequent years.

At the start of the Mau-Mau emergency he volunteered for service, and served in a senior capacity in the Embu district.

Since then he devoted his time to the farm, to his superb garden, and to his entomological activities.

From his early youth Pinkie was a keen naturalist; he developed an absorbing interest in entomology which he pursued throughout his life. In 1928 he took part in the British Museum Ruwenzori Expedition with T. W. Edwards, the dipterist and George Taylor the botanist (now Sir George Taylor, Director of Kew), and collected vast numbers of insects, particularly moths, butterflies and beetles, most of which are in the British Museum collections.

During his many years in Kenya, Pinkie Jackson assembled one of the world's finest collections of African butterflies. All his spare moments were spent collecting in various parts of Africa; he developed new collecting and breeding techniques and trained a number of Africans who were constantly employed collecting butterflies throughout tropical Africa. The results were hundreds of new species and numerous learned publications. In fact his contribution to our knowledge of the African butterfly fauna has been impressive, and probably the most important of the past thirty odd years.

In 1961 Pinkie began to feel that his collection should be more readily available to scientists, and sent part of it to the British Museum. The bulk of the collection and his very fine entomological library were willed to the National Museum in Nairobi.

Pinkie took great delight in all aspects of nature and was an excellent field ornithologist and botanist. Over the years he built up one of the most beautiful gardens in Kenya, as well as an outstanding collection of local and exotic orchids.

It is easy enough to record the bare facts of Pinkie Jackson's life and his achievements as an entomologist, as a farmer and as a gardener, but it is impossible to convey adequately the warmth and charm of his personality.

The brutal murder of this unfailingly kind, generous and wise man has been a great shock to everyone who knew him and a grievous loss to his many friends and relatives and to African entomology.

One must end this very inadequate tribute to a fine man and a dear friend with an expression of deepest sympathy to his two surviving sisters.

R. H. C.