



MORDECAI CUBITT COOKE.

Few men are more generally known in the mycological world for their writings than M. C. Cooke. We are indebted to Mr. J. Ramsbottom for the photograph which we present herewith. We think this was made some ten or fifteen years ago when Mr. Cooke was in the prime of his power. A short article and bibliography will be found on the following pages.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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BY C. G. LLOYD.

M. C. COOKE.

There recently died (November, 1914) in England, a man who has made more impression on British Mycology than any other person except Berkeley. A most voluminous writer, an indefatigable worker, he did much to popularize the subject of mycology in England. It was not my privilege to know him during his active days, but I met him once or twice at Kew, where he visited occasionally during his declining years.

Personally, I think that Cooke's works will be recognized in the future more from their quantity than their painstaking quality. He entered into many branches of natural history and animal life, as well as all departments of plant life, algae, diatoms and fungi from beginning to end. No man lives, or ever did live, who could master fungi in all its extent, and for a man to spread his knowledge over such a wide field necessitates a very thin layer. Had Cooke put the same amount of work and energy in a more restricted field he would have built a monument for himself such as Lister built on the Myxomycetes, or Boudier on the Discomycetes. Cooke was a very facile writer and as a popular writer on the subject in hand he had no equal. He was also a good artist, some of the pictures he drew of agarics from the living plant being scarcely subject to the faultfinder's criticism. A saying current among European mycologists is, that Cooke was so talented he could draw a picture of an agaric that he had never seen. However, he attempted to do so much work that he necessarily slighted much of it.

We present herewith a bibliography of his writings taken from the list in the Lloyd Library. Many articles scattered through various journals and periodical literature do not appear in this bibliography. The one book that Cooke wrote, and which appeals to me as having the most merit was the first edition of his "Handbook of British Fungi." This work I have always thought to be a most useful publication, the information being presented in a very plain and lucid style. It also gives more evidence of original investigation, and, I think, taking it as a whole, is more accurate than any other work he has written. The work is exhausted and out of print, commands a high price; three or four pounds, I believe, being paid when a copy is found in the secondhand dealer's hands. The second edition of this book does not compare with the first, being simply a translation from Fries, and with no acknowledgment as far as I have ever seen.

Cooke's "Handbook of Australian Fungi" is neither practical nor accurate, and I think few books on mycology have been written with as little basis for existence. Cooke's work on the Discomycetes was based on the study of dried specimens, consequently the numerous errors are largely due to this fact. Cooke's most ambitious work, the "Illustrations of British Fungi," is a monumental work of labor and patient application. I am told that not only did he make the original drawings of the plants, but that the figures were actually transferred by Cooke to the stones from which they were printed.

To sum up, although Cooke was a wonder in the amount of work that he accomplished, what appeals to me most strongly is the conservative nature of his nomenclature. Should a monument ever be raised to him, I trust they will carve on it in large letters:

"He was never a name juggler."

A detailed account of Cooke's life is given in the *Journal of Botany* (British), February, 1915, by J. Ramsbottom, B. A., in which is recorded many details that I am unable to produce on account of limited space.

Those who are interested in the works of Cooke will also find that Mr. Ramsbottom's valuable article supplies all that can be expected.

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