

was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Pavia, although he had never officially taught that subject. In 1906, Rignano was able to bring into being a scheme he had long cherished, namely, the foundation of an international journal dealing with the theoretical aspects of science and its relations with other realms of human experience. Under the name of *Scientia* this journal continues to flourish, and Rignano edited it himself until his death on Feb. 9 last. Towards the end of his life he was the recipient of numerous honours; in 1920 he was the Michonis Lecturer at the Collège de France, in 1923 he was named corresponding member of the Institute of France, and in 1926 of the Academy of Madrid.

Rignano's early association with engineering conferred a quality upon all his thought and writings which they never lost. Instead of constructing bridges across material ravines, he was constantly eager to bridge the gulfs which separate opposing positions in philosophy, and in this process merely destructive criticism was useless to him. Invested with a pre-eminently cross-bench mind, he approached each new opposition with only one prejudice, namely, that in all probability both sides would be partially right. Although in many cases his diagnosis of where they were wrong did not commend itself to other students, the example which he gave of creative synthesis of antinomies always merited the utmost praise.

In biology Rignano's efforts were all directed to mediating between the ancient enemies of vitalism and mechanism. He recognised on one hand that mysterious postulates such as the entelechy were admissions of the bankruptcy of our notions of causation, but, on the other hand, he felt that teleological considerations were too closely bound up with the phenomena of life to come unstuck, as it were, from them, even through the powerfully solvent action of the study of scientific method. Final causes were not, however, interpreted by Rignano in an Aristotelian manner, that is, as existing posterior in time to the events caused; his teleology was based on a postulated mnemonic quality on living organisms, which he called 'specific accumulation'. With the aid of this hypothesis, and of one or two others, such as the attribution of a separate form of energy, equivalent to heat or mechanical energy, to living systems—a form which would be transmutable into any of the others, following the principles of conservation, and yet would not be measurable since no apparatus had been devised for measuring it—Rignano constructed a complete theoretical biology. 'Energetical vitalism', as he called it, bridged the gulf between the disputants by retaining what was best from each, but it cannot be said to have won general approval, and is perhaps more valuable in its example than in its essence. It is fully described in Rignano's "On the Transmissibility of Acquired Characters: Hypothesis of a Centro-Epigenesis", "Biological Memory", "The Finalistic Aspect of Life", "What is Life?" and "Man Not a Machine".

In other fields Rignano's passion for synthesis and the abolition of contradictions appeared equally clearly. In his "Problems of the Psyche", he attempted to conciliate English 'Associationism' on one hand and German 'Gestaltism' on the other, demonstrating that at least potential activity impregnates all the manifestations of thought. In his "A Socialism in accordance with Liberal Economic Doctrine" he intervened between the elementary social justice to which the socialist critic appeals and the Utopian and impractical character of collectivism and other socialist systems, in order to advocate a gradual nationalisation of private capital by means of new laws relative to the right of testation. Finally, in the domain of ethics, he faced seriously the conflict between the morals of paganism and of ascetic Christianity, and in his "The Purpose of Man" proposed an ethical system founded on the harmony of life. His death is a severe blow to the constructive forces in philosophy at the present day.

JOSEPH NEEDHAM.

MR. CHARLES EDGAR SALMON, the well-known systematic botanist, whose sudden death occurred on Jan. 1, 1930, was born on Nov. 22, 1872. He was an architect by profession and had an extensive practice in the Reigate district. Salmon was essentially a field botanist with a wide knowledge of the British spermatophytic flora, to the study of which he had devoted most of his leisure time for many years. A considerable number of papers in the *Journal of Botany* and elsewhere testify to his industry and the part he played in advancing the study of British flowering plants. In addition, Salmon was an authority on the sea-lavenders (*Limonium*), and at the time of his death was correcting the proofs of a flora of his own county of Surrey. He was an active member of the Linnean Society and served on its Council from 1920 to 1923. His extensive herbarium, including part of the collections of the late Mr. Arthur Bennett, has been bequeathed to the British Museum (Natural History). His many colleagues will miss, first the help he was always willing to give in identifying species of the many genera with which he had worked and, above all, a genial unselfish friend remarkable for his amiability and sense of humour. W. B. T.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. Henry J. Cox, senior meteorologist in charge of the north-central forecasting district and corn and wheat region service of the U.S. Weather Bureau, on Jan. 7, aged sixty-six years.

Sir Gordon Guggisberg, K.C.M.G., until recently governor and commander-in-chief of British Guiana, formerly surveyor-general of Nigeria, and author, with the Rev. A. G. Fraser, of "The Future of the Negro", on April 21, aged sixty years.

Dr. R. M. Pearce, director of the Division of Medical Sciences of the Rockefeller Foundation, on Feb. 16, aged fifty-five years.

Mr. P. A. Ralli, chief aerodynamic expert and technical engineer for many years of the Fairey Aviation Company, who was known for his studies of air screws, on April 17, aged forty-one years.