

snakes, lizards, and frogs taking the place of diversions more usually associated with the nursery—and often causing consternation and alarm amongst her relatives and visitors. Whilst still at St. Paul's Girls' School, she called upon my father, Dr. G. A. Boulenger, F.R.S., who at that time was in charge of the reptile and amphibian collections at the British Museum. He at once perceived in her the makings of a brilliant herpetologist, and when she left school he invited her to work under his direction. Her special capabilities found full vent, and so valuable was her assistance that when my father retired, in 1920, Miss Procter was given the management of the vast collection. She proved not only an admirable systematist, but also an accomplished draughtswoman and modeller, and was responsible for some of the showcases in the Reptile Gallery in the Natural History Museum, and for a large series of coloured postcards of reptiles on sale at the Museum.

In 1923, Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, secretary of the Zoological Society, asked her to assist me in the design of the rockwork of the new Aquarium, then in course of construction, and later invited her to take over the curatorship of the Reptile House—the Aquarium at the time monopolising all my attention. As curator of reptiles she was an unqualified success, her great knowledge of reptiles coupled with her remarkable manual dexterity enabling her to perform many surgical operations on her charges that had not hitherto been attempted. The new Reptile House, opened in 1927, may fairly be regarded as a lasting monument to Miss Procter and her work. It combines the most modern developments of heating, lighting, and general hygiene, all of which she was quick to appreciate. The house, moreover, blends scientific requirements with artistic embellishment in a manner that had not hitherto been attempted in any zoological collection. During her curatorship at the Zoo she turned her artistic abilities to full account, and the majority of the more modern buildings and enclosures in the Regent's Park menagerie bear her stamp. The Reptile House, however, is pre-eminently her achievement and a worthy climax to an all too brief career.

Amongst her many contributions to scientific literature, her monograph on that remarkable tortoise *Testudo loveridgei*, published in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society* in 1922, may be specially mentioned.

Miss Procter will be mourned by all those who were privileged to come into personal contact with her. A larger number outside her immediate circle will miss an artist and a valuable contributor to knowledge—one who did so much and in so brief a period.

E. G. BOULENGER.

SIR GREGORY FOSTER, BT.

SIR GREGORY FOSTER, whose death occurred on Sept. 24, at the age of sixty-five years, was a singularly able and devoted worker in the cause of education and of university education in particular. He entered University College, London, as a student

in the 'eighties, graduating in 1888. He studied afterwards under ten Brink at Strasbourg, obtaining the degree of Ph.D. He was for some time professor of English at Bedford College, which was then situated in Baker Street, London, and he returned to University College as secretary and lecturer, becoming principal (afterwards provost) of the College in 1900, and holding that appointment until his retirement in 1929. In 1928 he was elected vice-chancellor of the University of London and was re-elected to that office in 1929. The greater part of his life was therefore spent in connexion with University College and the University of London.

The period during which Foster was provost of University College was one of the most notable in its history. The status of the College was altered by its incorporation in the University in 1907. Under his guidance its position was extended and consolidated in a remarkable degree. Existing departments were strengthened and new departments created, new chairs were established, and many additions of great importance were made to the curricula. The School of Librarianship and the Department of Scandinavian Languages owe much to him. The magnificent range of laboratories in connexion with the Department of Chemistry, the great buildings devoted to the medical sciences, and the Architectural and Engineering Departments are among the most important university buildings erected in England in recent years. Foster would have been the last to claim that he was primarily responsible for this remarkable growth in the equipment and resources of the College, for he preferred to give the credit to others. The College is not likely, however, when honouring his memory, to forget the part he played or the great gifts of leadership which he displayed.

Foster was devoted to the interests of the students, and he carried on and developed the work begun by Henry Morley, for whom he had a great admiration, in fostering a corporate life in the College. He was a strict disciplinarian, but his innate kindness brought instant and unobtrusive help to many, of all nationalities, who were in difficulty. Thus, in spite of the reserve which gave him his dignity of bearing, he won the popularity which comes to fearless and humane men who do not seek it. He gave himself without stint to the College, and its welfare and advancement were ever in his thoughts. He never spared himself. Possibly he worked too hard, for he was unwilling to delegate to others any duty that he thought important, and in the opinion of his friends he would have been wise to have 'let go' when, a few years ago, his health showed serious signs of strain. He never lost his early interest in philological studies, in which he doubtless would have made his mark had not other duties engrossed his attention.

Although primarily concerned with University College, Foster was interested in many educational questions generally. He was always a staunch friend to the cause of women's education, and when he became vice-chancellor of the University of

London he was concerned with the facilities offered to medical women and generally with improving residential and social facilities for London students. Until quite recently, as chairman of the Council, he was endeavouring to raise funds for College Hall for Women in Bloomsbury. He had always been a prominent advocate of reform in the constitution of the University, of which he was a devoted son, and the University was fortunate in that at the difficult period of transition from the old statutes to the new he was, in the position of vice-chancellor, able to bring about the necessary changes with the least possible friction.

His health had not been good for some little time, but he endured the pain and inconvenience of illness with fortitude and fine courage. He will be greatly missed and not soon forgotten. E. D.

MR. J. W. TAYLOR, of Leeds, who died on Sept. 2, in his eighty-seventh year, was the doyen of British conchologists and was responsible, more than anyone else, for the intensive study of our land and fresh-water Mollusca. He founded the *Journal of Conchology* in 1874, and with some of his friends (of whom Mr. H. Crowther still survives) established the Conchological Society in 1876. In 1894 he began the publication of his "Monograph of the Land and Fresh-water Mollusca of the British Isles", probably the most complete account of any group of animals which has been attempted, and beautifully illustrated by himself. The second volume, written in conjunction with W. D. Roebuck, is the only satisfactory description of British slugs. Unfortunately, with less than half completed, publica-

tion has been suspended since 1921. Mr. Taylor was a printer, and received the degree of M.Sc. from the University of Leeds in 1915.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. Francis Barnard, honorary curator of coins and medals in the University of Oxford and formerly professor of medieval archaeology in the University of Liverpool, on Oct. 9, aged seventy-six years.

Prof. C. L. Bristol, emeritus professor of biology in the University of New York, known for his researches on the marine fauna of Bermuda, on Aug. 27, aged seventy-two years.

Sir Arthur E. Cowley, fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and late Bodley's librarian, on Oct. 12, aged sixty-nine years.

Prof. J. B. Goesse, *S.J.*, emeritus professor of geophysical observations in the Saint Louis University and founder of the geophysical observatory of the University, on July 25, aged sixty-two years.

Prof. J. Long, formerly professor of dairy farming at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, a well-known agricultural writer, on Oct. 1, aged eighty-five years.

Prof. Richard A. F. Penrose, jr., formerly professor of geology in the University of Chicago, and formerly a member of several State geological surveys and also of the U.S. Geological Survey, on July 31, aged sixty-eight years.

Prof. James T. Porter, head of the Department of Physics in the University of Tennessee, on Aug. 27, aged fifty-seven years.

News and Views.

It was widely believed in the seventeenth century, even by Otto von Guericke for example, that air could be condensed into a watery liquid by compression. The origin of this belief is discussed in a note by Prof. E. O. von Lippmann in the *Chemiker Zeitung* for Sept. 5. He points out that the transformation of air into water is implied in early Greek philosophy and in Aristotle's theory of the elements, but he thinks the transmission of the belief is to be ascribed to Lucian (second century A.D.), who, in his satirical "True History", relates how a ship was blown by a whirlwind on to a star, from which the shipwrecked travellers saw the earth below as a shining sphere. The inhabitants of this star took as food only the vapours of flying frogs roasted over fires, and as drink, air condensed to a liquid in vessels by pressure. Lucian, who is generally supposed to have no claim to originality, may have derived the idea from some unknown earlier writer. In amplification of Prof. Lippmann's interesting note, it may be added that the writings of Lucian (available in an excellent English translation by H. W. and F. G. Fowler: Oxford, 1905) contain many such hints, concealed by the very artificial style of the author. Lucian refers, for example, in the same "True History", to a peace treaty between the inhabitants of the sun and moon, engraved on a

tablet of electrum and set up on the frontier between their territories. This undoubtedly refers to the use of electrum, as an alloy of gold and silver, as a kind of neutral material combining the properties of both gold and silver, which are associated with the sun and moon respectively. Electrum, however, is referred by contemporary and later neo-Platonic writers to a separate planet, Jupiter or Mars, and the date of its removal from the list of planetary metals and replacement by the metal mercury has been discussed (for example, by Berthelot) without mention of Lucian's hint. There are several other similar references made by this author which are of interest in the history of science.

DR. H. MARTIN LEAKE, in the *Contemporary Review* for September, voices a plea for the establishment of biology on the basis of a real profession. Of late years there has arisen a widespread demand for trained biologists, due to the post-War development of the Colonies, which lie mainly in the tropics. The demand exceeds the supply, and this is not adequately explained by lack of educational facilities. The basal trouble appears to be the lack of that security of tenure and emolument which is essential if workers of the right calibre are to be attracted to biological