scientific worker for more precise information on plant performance being balanced against the extra worries which such trials place on works staff.

Sometimes the application of a new idea or device is delayed because of a natural desire on the part of production executives to see whether it operates successfully elsewhere before committing themselves to major expenditure. In such cases, trials on small units can often speed application to larger units. A good example of this was the application of a metallic recuperator to reheating furnaces. A new design, developed abroad, was felt to be promising, but lack of previous experience caused hesitancy in applying it on new soaking pit furnaces. The construction and exhaustive testing of a small recuperator attached to a works' furnace gave results which were sufficiently promising to lead to large-scale applications both in the United Steel Companies and in other industries.

OBITUARIES

Miss M. S. Johnston

MISS MARY SOPHIA JOHNSTON, second daughter of the Rev. W. A. Johnston, rector of Acrise, Kent, was born at Folkestone on October 29, 1875, but spent the greater part of her life first at Wimbledon and then at Kew, Surrey. She became keenly interested in geology as a girl and very soon established her position among the amateurs in days when women geologists were few. Her interests lay mostly in stratigraphical and physical geology, and it was on an aspect of these that she wrote her best-known paper (with the late Miss M. C. Crosfield) on "The Ballstone and Associated Beds in the Wenlock Limestone of Shropshire".

Until age somewhat curbed her strenuous activities, Miss Johnston was a constant and energetic participant in the field meetings of the Geologists' Association (which she joined in 1898), while she had field experience of foreign geology at several meetings of the International Geological Congress, at the Toronto meeting of the British Association, and by travel in Egypt. On all these occasions she collected assiduously. Thus she built up a remarkable collection, which was always at the use of students and which she presented ultimately to the nation and to various universities. She wrote on some of her observations abroad, and also lectured extensively about them.

Miss Johnston had a life-long interest in archæology and heraldry, and compiled historical pamphlets on Richmond (Surrey) and Kew.

She was proud of being one of the first, small group of distinguished women elected as Fellows of the Geological Society of London in 1919. She served as an officer of the Geologists' Association for twenty-one years (and was made an honorary member in 1939), on the Council of the Palæontographical Society, and as treasurer of the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies. She was a fearless but very fair critic on committees, where she displayed a fine sense of financial rectitude.

Her scientific friends knew Miss Johnston as an ever-helpful and charming personality. It was left to those more intimate with her to know of her generosity to Kew churches and of her valuable work for youth. No account of her would be complete without reference to the active benefactor she was

to one of the Richmond boys' schools and to various tradesmen's rowing organizations. She was also an officer of several of the latter and guided them wisely for many years (in one case she was honorary treasurer for more than twenty-seven years until her death).

Miss Johnston maintained her activities and interests to the last, and her death, after a short illness, on January 23 was a shock to her many friends.
H. DIGHTON THOMAS

Mr. Eric Parker

FROM his schooldays at Eton until his death on February 13, Eric Parker was able to enjoy his love of the countryside. When he could no longer get about on foot, he drove himself around his beautiful garden at Feathercombe, near Godalming, in his electrically propelled chair. His last book, "Surrey Gardens", was published a year ago, and to gather material for it he visited eighty-four gardens.

Though he wrote so much on shooting and fishing, the pleasure he got from sport took second place to his interests as a naturalist. His eye was attracted by the detail of all around him: the water rat biting off the head of a lily; martins flying south as high as he had ever seen them, on a warm westerly wind in October; the change in the song of a bird; the wild-flowers of the hedgerow.

Before he joined the staff of *The Field* in 1910 to take over the shooting from James Harting, he was writing prolifically, at one time for *The Field*, *The Spectator*, *The County Gentleman*, *The Gamekeeper*, which he edited, and *The Cornhill Magazine*. At the time when he was editor of *The County Gentleman*, he formed a great friendship with Anthony Collett, for whom he did the illustrations to "British Inland Birds".

Parker never accepted any statement lightly, and this led him to analyse the observations of the early writers on natural history and to compare them with those of recent naturalists and his own. He experimented with a bow and arrow to reproduce the drumming of the tail feathers of a snipe. He held the belief that the drumming of woodpeckers is vocal, and in his "World of Birds" he gives accounts of trials he made to prove it and presents the case for and against his own conviction. He neither feared controversy nor failed to attack practices he condemned, as in his "Ethics of Egg Collecting". He hated any form of cruelty. He was opposed to tail docking of horses and dogs, and it was mainly due to his attack on the caged-bird sellers of Club Row that the traffic in wild birds was stopped. But he had no room for false sentimentality, and in 1931, after he had become editor of *The Field*, he organized a committee to consider measures to be taken against the spread of the grey squirrel.

To the Lonsdale Library, which he edited, Parker contributed much, including the volume on "Game Birds, Beasts and Fishes". The many books he wrote at his table before the window through which birds flew in to the food tray were in the purest and simplest English. Anyone reading the 'week-end' books alone could add much to his general knowledge.

On the day of Eric Parker's funeral an incident occurred which it would have given him pleasure to watch. Two of his grandsons saw a field mouse by the roadside which the youngest one gently handled and released.
R. N. ROSE