

gentle and unassuming character endeared him to his many intimate friends and pupils. His personal charm was greatly enhanced by a keen sense of humour; he delighted in a good story. In conversation Minchin was gifted with a happy turn of phrase. His friend, Mr. Heron-Allen, with whom he spent his last days, tells us that in answer to a quotation from O. W. Holmes, that "Life, as we call it, is nothing but the edge of the boundless ocean of existence where it comes on soundings," Minchin replied, "And death, as we call it, is nothing but the unfathomed deeps of the ocean of existence where we lose the sounding plumb."

DR. T. ALBRECHT.

WE deeply regret to announce the death, on August 31, at seventy-two years of age, of Dr. Theodor Albrecht, departmental chief in the Royal Prussian Geodetic Institute, Potsdam, and chief of the International Bureau for Investigating Latitude Variation since its inception in 1898. By his death, geodesy loses a painstaking and conscientious worker, who laboured zealously to unravel a complicated problem, and to carry forward the investigations so brilliantly inaugurated by the late Dr. Chandler. For many years he occupied himself with the study of the minute changes in the position of the earth's axis, and by his office had been mainly responsible for the methods of observation applied, and the trustworthiness of the results derived.

Prof. Fergola, as is well known, urged the necessity of attacking this question of latitude variation by a uniform and systematic method of observation under international control, so far back as 1883, but it was not until twelve years later that any progress was made, when Profs. Forster and Helmert, supported by the hopeful researches of Chandler, were able to bring the far-reaching scheme to fruition. From that time onward, Albrecht was identified with this plan, to which he gave untiring devotion. Even before his appointment as director, he had signalled his interest in these researches by discussing the motion of the pole in the interval 1890-95, from observations made at some dozen observatories in Europe and America. Since then Dr. Albrecht issued reports with praiseworthy regularity, and his diagrams showing the excursions of the pole have been models of clearness. Under his superintendence the bureau justified itself by its diligent, patient labour and skill in handling minute details. Criticism has not been wanting, but probably there was little room for originality or brilliancy of treatment.

The late director performed a useful work in keeping an interesting problem before the scientific world, and though in these days there must be great difficulty in maintaining an international bureau, supported by the varying subsidies of many nations, amounting in all, we believe, to about 3000*l.* per annum, it would be a matter of regret if any breach of continuity in the conduct of the bureau should result.

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NOTES.

At the recent meeting in Manchester, the General Committee of the British Association unanimously adopted the following resolution, which has been forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Presidents of the Board of Education and of Agriculture and Fisheries:—"That the British Association for the Advancement of Science, believing that the higher education of the nation is of supreme importance in the present crisis of our history, trusts that his Majesty's Government will, by continuing its financial support, maintain the efficiency of teaching and research in the universities and university colleges of the United Kingdom."

THE urgent need for a wise economy in every department of public and private life is recognised by every patriot anxious to see the war brought to a successful end. A timely protest in the Press from Sir James Yoxall, M.P., against unintelligent and wrongly directed economy deserves notice. At no time in the country's history has it been more necessary that every effort should be made to make our system of education efficient and thorough, so that when military conflict gives place to industrial competition we may be able to hold our own with the central European States. Yet Sir James Yoxall has to direct attention to attempts to save money at the expense of the education of the nation's children. "Supplies of books, stationery, and other needed school appliances are being lessened in amount or reduced in quality; plans are laid for abolishing evening classes and schools; and there is evidence of a wide general slackening in educational provision." Some local education authorities have contemplated reducing the salaries of teachers. "The Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners, operatives themselves, and many of them parents, are asking that children may go into the mills to work full time at the age of thirteen. Agricultural people demand 'half-time' for children of eleven; and so does the Cotton Spinners' Trade Union, I understand." Such unwise economy must be discouraged everywhere, and it is the duty of every influential person to do his part to prevent any deterioration in the work of our schools and colleges, because upon it our country's welfare ultimately depends.

MR. E. W. SWANTON has been elected president of the British Mycological Society.

THE Thomas Hawksley Lecture of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers will be delivered on Friday, October 29, by Dr. Dugald Clerk; the subject will be, "The World's Sources of Fuel and Motive Power."

A PRELIMINARY meeting to discuss the formation of a proposed Society for the Study of Geological Physics will be held at the rooms of the Geological Society of London, Burlington House, W., on Thursday, October 14, at 3.30 p.m. The chair will be taken by Prof. Benjamin Moore.

THE issue of *Science* for September 17 announces the death of Prof. Karl E. Guthe, professor of physics in the University of Michigan and dean of the