

incidentally for the Exchequer because any unconsidered fractional difference might go there.

It is time for those who think that a unified system of measurement is worth having to make a push for it. It is scarcely likely that, to the open mind, there can be any real difference of opinion as to the units which should be chosen. It is one of the truisms of science that the same reasoning always leads to the same conclusion. All the traditional obstacles have disappeared, and, above all things, we want to get on. Another era with the schools and universities using one set of units and all practical people using a different set is almost as deplorable an outlook as peace by negotiation.

NAPIER SHAW.

PROF. H. G. PLIMMER, F.R.S.

BIOLICAL and medical science has sustained a great loss by the passing away of Henry George Plimmer on Saturday last, June 22. Plimmer had contributed much by his writing and influence to comparative pathology during his life, and his last illness interrupted a valuable and strenuous research on trench fever. During his earlier years he prepared himself for a scientific career by visiting and working with the great pioneers of that time, and it was doubtless owing to the influence of men like Pasteur that the direction of much of his subsequent research was due. He always kept up his Continental interests, and often took part in the proceedings of foreign scientific congresses.

For many years Plimmer was connected with the Royal College of Surgeons and with the Zoological Gardens, which afforded him great opportunities for investigating pathological problems. About three years ago he was appointed to the chair of comparative pathology at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, which had been founded by the munificence of an anonymous donor.

The scientific, as well as the sterling human, qualities of Plimmer found abundant opportunity in his new post. His lectures were eagerly attended by a large body of students, and as this attendance was quite voluntary, it is no small tribute to his genius that the room was often crowded, even to overflowing. Gifted with an unassuming and sympathetic nature, as well as possessed of a knowledge of the world, his help and advice were often sought by those in trouble or difficulty, and many a young man would readily acknowledge the debt owing to his kindly help and wise counsel.

Plimmer was a fellow of the Royal Society, as well as of many other learned societies, both at home and abroad, and his contributions to science are scattered through their Proceedings and Transactions. He was an accomplished microscopist, and his presidential address to the Royal Microscopical Society is a model of critical and scholarly research.

This is, however, neither the time nor the place

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to attempt a full account of his scientific labours. That must come later. But Plimmer's interests were not restricted to the pursuit of science: Endowed with many and varied gifts (he was, for example, a musician of the very first rank), it was often a matter of surprise to many of his friends that he could have possibly found time and opportunity to develop and excel in them as he actually did.

It is hard to speak of Plimmer as a friend in sufficiently measured terms, and those who knew him best are best able to appreciate the rare qualities of the man. Partly Stoic, partly Epicurean, and largely something wholly his own, he was a delightful companion. Added to a philosophical and discriminating enjoyment of the best that life has to offer, his loyal and unselfish nature endeared him to a wide circle of devotedly attached friends. Perhaps the most that can be said of any man is that the world is a better place for his having lived in it, and this is emphatically true of Plimmer.

J. B. F.

DR. E. A. NEWELL ARBER.

THE death of Dr. Newell Arber, on June 14, in his forty-eighth year, after a long illness, adds another name to the already long list of palæobotanists whose obituary notices have appeared in these columns during the last two or three years. After taking his degree at Cambridge, Arber was appointed university demonstrator in palæobotany in 1899, a post which he held at the time of his death. He devoted himself heart and soul to the study of fossil plants both by his own researches, extending over a wide field, and by his ever willing help to the students whom he taught: through his energy a large number of fossil plants were added to the Sedgwick Museum, and the well-arranged and carefully named collections bear witness to his methodical and careful curatorship. In 1909 he married Miss Agnes Robertson, an accomplished botanist, who has recently been re-elected to a fellowship at Newnham College.

In addition to numerous papers, Arber published four books: a British Museum Catalogue of the Plants of the Glossopteris Flora (1905), a work which is much more than a compilation and is indispensable to palæobotanical and geological students; "Plant Life in Alpine Switzerland" (1910); a volume on the coast scenery of North Devon (1911); and a very useful book on coal, one of the "Cambridge Manuals," which has been translated into Russian. Much of his original work was concerned with British Carboniferous plants: he by no means confined himself to collecting and describing specimens, but made valuable contributions to the stratigraphical problems connected with the floras. He was particularly interested in the Kent coalfield and added considerably to our knowledge of the floras of the Forest of Wyre, the Forest of Dean, and other coalfields. He published papers on the anatomy of Sigillaria, in collaboration with Hamshaw Thomas, Medul-

losa, Lyginopteris, Cupressinoxylon, Dadoxylon, and other genera. A memoir, published this year, on the earlier Mesozoic floras of New Zealand, an extension of a shorter paper read to the Royal Society, is an especially valuable addition to our knowledge of a much neglected subject. Two papers written in collaboration with his friend Major Parkin, on the origin and evolution of the Angiosperms, afford evidence of Arber's power of treating in a philosophical spirit difficult and controversial problems. Among other papers, mention may be made of one on the past history of ferns, and of those on Glossopteris, in which the sporangia are described for the first time, Lagenostoma, Psymphyllum, Yuccites, Zamites, and Pterophyllum.

Arber had made for himself a name as an authority on the economic side of palæobotany, primarily in connection with the Kent coalfield. It is impossible, in a short article, to give an adequate account of his original work; his output was much greater than that of most men of his years, and, in view of the difficulties with which he had to contend, the amount he was able to accomplish compels our admiration. Arber was a man of strong convictions and had the courage of his opinions; he was unsparing of himself in his devotion to the science which he loved and to the service of his university. Those who knew him well felt for him a deep affection and can most sincerely share the grief of his devoted wife, with whom he enjoyed a true companionship of heart and work.

A. C. SEWARD.

NOTES.

THE Board of Trade has appointed, with the concurrence of the Ministry of Reconstruction, a Committee to examine and report upon the water-power resources of the United Kingdom and the extent to which they can be made available for industrial purposes. The members of the Committee are:—Sir John F. C. Snell (chairman), Mr. G. S. Albright, Sir Dugald Clerk, F.R.S., Dr. J. F. Crowley, Mr. H. F. Carlill, Mr. P. Dawson, Prof. A. H. Gibson, Mr. V. Hartshorn, J.P., Dr. H. R. Mill, Mr. A. Newlands, Mr. G. C. Vyle, Mr. A. J. Walter, Mr. Ralph Walter (Ministry of Reconstruction), and Mr. D. J. Williams. Mr. R. T. G. French is the secretary, and all communications intended for the Committee should be addressed to him at 10 Princes Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

THE twenty-ninth annual meeting of the Museums Association will be held at Manchester on July 9-11 under the presidency of Mr. E. Rimbault Dibdin. Among the subjects to be discussed are:—"The Museum in Relation to Art and Industry," H. Cadness; "The Application of Art to Industry and its Relation to Museum Work," S. E. Harrison; "The Museum and Trade," T. Midgley; and "Arrangement of an Ethnographical Collection," B. H. Mullen.

At the annual meeting of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, held last month, Col. J. J. Carty, U.S. Signal Corps, was presented with the Edison medal of the institute in recognition of his services in developing the science and art of telephone engineering.

WE regret to note that the death of Mr. John H. Heck is recorded in *Engineering* for June 21. Mr. Heck was senior engineering surveyor to Lloyd's Register of Shipping in the Glasgow district, and was sixty-seven years of age. He read many papers on engineering subjects before the Institution of Naval Architects, the North-East Coast Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders, and other technical societies.

THE death is announced in his forty-ninth year of Dr. C. C. Trowbridge, assistant professor of physics at Columbia University, New York. Dr. Trowbridge had made notable contributions to the knowledge of meteors and of the mechanics of bird-flight. One of his principal services to Columbia University was his development of the E. K. Adams precision laboratory, one of the best-planned and best-equipped laboratories in America.

THE registrar of the Institute of Chemistry has received a letter from the Board of Education stating that the Ministry of National Service has cancelled the arrangements made in connection with military service to students of chemistry. The effect of this cancellation is that any student of chemistry in Category B (i), C (i), or B (ii), or in Grade 2, who has hitherto been protected under the arrangements in question will be called up, if otherwise available for service.

WE learn from the *Lancet* that Prof. S. J. Pozzi, professor of clinical gynaecology in the University of Paris, was fatally shot on June 13 in his consulting-room in Paris by a lunatic patient. Prof. Pozzi was born at Bergerac (Dordogne) in 1846. He was educated at the lycées of Pau and Bordeaux, becoming a student of medicine in Paris in 1869, where he was an apt pupil of Paul Broca. From 1885 to 1894 he acted as secretary-general of the French Congress of Surgery, and in 1895 was elected to the Academy of Medicine. He was an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and an officer of the Legion of Honour.

THE council of the Royal Society of Arts announces that the next award of the Swiney prize will be in January, 1919. Dr. Swiney died in 1844, and in his will he left the sum of 5000*l.* Consols to the society, for the purpose of presenting a prize, on every fifth anniversary of his death, to the author of the best published work on jurisprudence. The prize is a cup, value 100*l.*, and money to the same amount. The award is made jointly by the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal College of Physicians, and is given alternately for works on medical and on general jurisprudence. On the last occasion of the award, in 1914, the prize was awarded for general jurisprudence. It will, therefore, be offered on the present occasion for medical jurisprudence.

ONE of the tasks of the General Staff at the War Office during the war has been the issue of a *Daily Review of the Foreign Press*, the scope of which has been extended from time to time by the preparation of supplements dealing with special subjects. A fortnightly Technical Supplement, compiled with the co-operation of the Institution of Civil Engineers, was added to the list in January last, and since then has been widely circulated through official channels for the assistance of naval and military workers. We are now informed that it has been decided to place the Technical Supplement on sale, and the issues of May 28 and subsequent numbers may be obtained at the cost of sixpence through any bookseller or directly from H.M. Stationery Office at Imperial House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.