

lay no claim to scientific distinction, probably not even to a taste for science. Nevertheless, during a long and honourable career, he did more than any one to enrich our gardens with beautiful plants from foreign countries, and in that way helped on the cause of botanical science very considerably. Whilst his primary interest was to introduce to Great Britain plants valuable from the trader's point of view, he never grudged the time his collectors spent in making pure botanical collections of dried material. The collections made by his brother, John Gould Veitch, in Japan, consisting largely of cones of pines, firs, spruces, etc., helped greatly towards the elucidation of the coniferous flora of that country, just as, thirty years later, did the collections made by Wilson that of central and western China.

Sir Harry had that supreme endowment of the business man—the faculty of finding capable assistants—and in the long roll of collectors who worked for the firm, from William Lobb in 1840 to E. H. Wilson in 1900, there are included many famous names. Scarcely less noteworthy were the activities initiated by him in the hybridisation of plants. Under his direction, the first hybrid orchid was raised, *Calanthe Dominii*, the forerunner of a branch of horticulture that has grown to enormous dimensions at the present time. Very valuable work, too, was done in the improvement of hippeastrums, the East Indian group of rhododendrons, as well as in fruits and vegetables.

Sir Harry played a great part in the International Horticultural Exhibition of 1912, and his work for it was acknowledged by the bestowal of a knighthood on him. It is interesting to recall also that he was the last survivor of the managing committee of the previous International Exhibition of 1866. His career may be

safely described as unique in horticulture in its length and activity. Two valuable standard works, the "Manual of Coniferae" and the "Manual of Orchidaceous Plants," were published under his auspices, although the actual work was done by his assistant, A. W. Kent.

About ten years ago he retired from business and, having no one to succeed him, the Chelsea firm of Veitch came to an end, an event which can only be regarded as a calamity to British horticulture, for never had it stood higher in public estimation than during the days when gardeners, both amateur and professional, watched in sadness its famous collections of trees, shrubs, and hothouse plants being dispersed under the hammer. For the rest of his life, until within a few months of his death, Sir Harry worked actively in the interests of the Royal Horticultural Society, the astonishing success of which owes much to him, and in helping the many charities in which he was interested.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. R. Kidston, F.R.S., the distinguished palæobotanist, on July 13.

Prof. A. Marshall, emeritus professor of political economy, University of Cambridge, on July 13, aged eighty-one.

Sir Sydney Russell-Wells, member of Parliament for the University of London and vice-chancellor of the University 1919–22, on July 14, aged fifty-four.

Mr. Dean C. Worcester, first secretary of the Interior, Philippine Islands, who was largely responsible for the establishment of the Bureau of Science, the Philippine General Hospital and the College of Medicine in the islands, formerly assistant professor of zoology and curator of the museum at the University of Michigan, on May 2, aged fifty-seven.

### Current Topics and Events.

REPRESENTATIVES of a number of educational, scientific, and commercial bodies in Great Britain and Overseas attended a conference organised by the Decimal Association at the Institution of Electrical Engineers on July 9. The main subjects discussed were the Association's proposal to divide the shilling into ten pence instead of twelve, and to alter the Imperial gallon so as to make it equal to four litres. The former proposal means a twenty per cent. increase of the value of a penny, and by it "an almost complete decimal coinage would be secured, while preserving the old names of *l. s. d.* and the three-column method of book-keeping, and incidentally a reasonable solution of the present impasse in penny postage and penny fares would be found." At present, services and commodities which could be profitably provided for slightly more than a penny are subjected to a fifty per cent. increase, whereas a penny would be sufficient if the value were increased as suggested. Mr. Harold Cox, who was a member of the Royal Commission on Decimal Coinage in 1920, said at the conference that if this proposal had been before the Commission he believed the majority of the members would have been in favour of it. The proposal to make the Imperial gallon equal to four litres instead of the present 4.54, so that the quart would become

one litre and the pint half a litre, arises largely from the present confusion in the use of the designation "gallon" in commercial transactions relating to motor spirit and lubricating oils. The American gallon has a capacity twenty per cent. less than the Imperial gallon, and in South America a capacity of four litres is being called a gallon, so that a single name is being used for three different quantities. The introduction of a four-litre gallon would, of course, be an important step towards the adoption of other metric weights and measures in Great Britain. Whatever may be said in favour of the British system, it can never become an international system, and as trade develops with new countries the need for the use of a universal language of quantity by British firms must become more important every year. The conference passed resolutions urging the Government to appoint a committee to examine and report upon the proposals discussed.

IN connexion with a recent paragraph concerning the therapeutic action of chlorine gas, it is of interest to observe an account in the *Sunday Express* of July 6 of the introduction as an antiseptic of a compound containing chlorine. There are two ways in which chlorine can be used therapeutically; in one method, a very dilute mixture of the gas in air is