

German, and French, and continued his botanical pursuits, the results of which were embodied in a "Handbook of Hardy Trees, Shrubs and Herbaceous Plants," still highly esteemed by gardeners, and in an "Outline of the Flora of Sussex," prized by local botanists. So high was the standard Hemsley had set himself and had attained, that in 1875 the Linnean Society elected him one of its botanical associates.

By 1874, Hemsley's health, though still indifferent, justified his return to Kew as an independent worker. During the next nine years he was engaged principally on the task of elaborating the phanerogamic material obtained during the cruise of the *Challenger*, and of describing the botanical collections of Messrs. Salvin and Godman. The *Challenger* report was published in 1885, and secured for Hemsley the position of a recognised authority on insular floras. The botanical work done on behalf of Salvin and Godman was published in the five botanical volumes of their great "Biologia Centrali-Americana," issued at intervals during 1879-1888; the extraordinary value of this Mexican flora was recognised, so soon as it was completed, by Hemsley's election to the Royal Society in 1889.

Meanwhile Hemsley's health had, happily, become completely restored, and in 1883 he once more was able to join the permanent staff of the herbarium at Kew as assistant for India. In 1890, when Prof. D. Oliver was succeeded by Mr. J. G. Baker as Keeper of the Herbarium and Library, Hemsley was appointed a principal assistant in succession to Mr. Baker, and in 1899, when the latter retired from the public service, Hemsley again succeeded Baker, and served as Keeper of the Herbarium and Library at Kew until his own retirement, at sixty-five, on December 28, 1908. While assistant for India and principal assistant, Hemsley was able to prepare his invaluable work on the flora of China, which occupies three entire volumes of the Linnean Society's Journal. During this period, too, he collaborated with Dr. J. E. T. Aitchison in working out the botanical results of the Afghan Boundary Commission, with Sir Henry Collett in doing the same for the Shan Plateau, and with Mr. H. H. W. Pearson in writing a valuable "Flora of High Asia." He was also the author of many smaller, but always important, botanical contributions, mainly of a systematic character. He took a share, with other members of the Kew staff, in the preparation of the "Flora of Tropical Africa," and assisted Sir Joseph Hooker, after his retirement in 1885, in connexion with the *Botanical Magazine*, which Sir Joseph continued to edit after he had ceased to be Director of Kew.

As Keeper of the Herbarium, Hemsley found his time very fully occupied with official duties, and although many minor contributions to botanical literature were still made by him, he wisely avoided undertaking any task so formidable as those accomplished in his earlier years of active work. After his retirement Hemsley continued this policy for another reason. He did not care to undertake a task he might not have strength to complete. His work on the matters he took up remained, however, as excellent as ever, and was continued until failing physical powers necessitated his seeking a home in a climate more bracing than that of the Thames Valley.

Hemsley's labours were appreciated as highly in

other countries as in his own. His contribution to the "Biologia Centrali-Americana" brought him honorary membership of the Natural History Society of Mexico; his knowledge of insular floras brought him honorary membership of the Royal Society of New South Wales, and of the New Zealand Institute, and corresponding membership of the German Botanical Society. His services to garden-lovers brought him honorary membership of the Royal Horticultural Society and the award of its Victoria Medal of Honour. In 1896 the Linnean Society accorded him, at his own request, transfer from associateship to fellowship, and in 1918 the University of Aberdeen conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D.

The courtesy and consideration which made collaboration with Hemsley as a botanical author as pleasant as it was profitable to those thus privileged, made the relationship between himself as Keeper and his colleagues in the Herbarium equally cordial. Not they alone, but all who ever came in contact with Hemsley will treasure the memory of one whom they esteemed for a kindness as genuine as his sincerity, for a knowledge as remarkable as his modesty.

#### LORD ABERCROMBY.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL circles in Scotland have lost one of their most distinguished figures by the death of Lord Abercromby, which took place at Edinburgh on October 7 in his eighty-third year.

John, fifth baron Abercromby of Aboukir and Tullibody, was born on January 15, 1841. He was a great-grandson of General Sir Ralph Abercromby, who died from wounds at the battle of Alexandria in 1801, and whose widow was created a baroness. Lord Abercromby succeeded to the title on the death of his brother in 1917. He was educated at Harrow, and for some years held a commission in the Rifle Brigade. After his retirement he took up the study of philology, folklore, and archæology. His publications were not numerous, but they were characterised by accuracy, scholarship, and judgment. Although not all of his conclusions have found acceptance, some of his views, especially those relating to the origin and distribution of Bronze Age types of pottery, have had a profound and widespread influence on the trend of archæological thought. One of the earliest of his publications was "A Trip through the Eastern Caucasus." Better known was his "Pre- and Proto-Historic Finns," in which he traced the history of the Eastern and Western Finns from neolithic times to the Middle Ages, analysed their religious beliefs and folklore, and translated their traditional magic songs. This valuable piece of work was recognised by election as an honorary member of the Finnish Archæological Society and the Finno-Ougrian Society of Helsingfors. His most important work, however, was his "Bronze Age Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland," which appeared in 1912; this was a gathering together and elaboration of the views which he had expressed in various scientific periodicals in the preceding ten years or more. A further notable contribution to the study of prehistoric ceramics appeared in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute for 1914 under the title "The Prehistoric Pottery of the Canary Islands and its Makers."

Lord Abercromby was a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and an hon. LL.D. of the University of Edinburgh. He was a vice-president of the Folklore Society and formerly president of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. In 1921 he presided over Section H (Anthropology) of the British Association at the Edinburgh meeting, and when, in the following year, a local branch of the Royal Anthropological Institute was formed at Edinburgh, he was unanimously elected the first president. His tact and charm of manner, his never-failing courtesy to all, and his assiduous attention to the duties of the offices he held, notwithstanding failing health, won the affection and respect of all with whom he came into contact. As Lord Abercromby leaves no heirs male, the title now becomes extinct.

THE death is announced on August 4 last of Dr. Santiago Roth, head of the department of palæontology in the Museum of La Plata, Argentina. Dr. Roth was born in Switzerland and emigrated to Argentina nearly half a century ago, where he became especially skilled in collecting fossil skeletons of mammals from the pampas. He sold many fine specimens to the museums of Zurich and Geneva, and some also to the

Zoological Museum of Copenhagen. When the Museum of La Plata was founded, he was employed by the late Dr. F. P. Moreno to collect similar pampean skeletons for that institution, and he was soon appointed to take charge of the fossils. Dr. Roth added much to our knowledge of the pampean formations, which he studied extensively and in great detail, and he also described many of the mammalian remains.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. Edouard G. Deville, I.S.O., Director-General of Surveys in the Canadian Department of the Interior, and author of "Astronomic and Geodetic Calculations" and "Photographic Surveying," on September 21, aged seventy-three.

Dr. E. O. Hovey, curator of the Department of Geology and Invertebrate Paleontology of the American Museum of Natural History, on September 27, from a stroke received in his office on the preceding day, aged sixty-two.

Dr. C. W. Moulton, professor of chemistry since 1894 at Vassar College, New York, on September 13, aged sixty-five.

Dr. J. M. Schaeberle, formerly at the Lick Observatory, and author of a number of papers on astronomical subjects, aged seventy-one.

### Current Topics and Events

THE Everest Expedition of 1924 reported to a joint meeting of the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club before a distinguished assembly in the Albert Hall on October 17. Earlier in the day a memorial service for Mallory and Irvine was held in St. Paul's Cathedral. Pioneers like Drake and Livingstone, these two perished, as did Scott and Shackleton, in an attempt to go one step beyond the bounds hitherto set to human endeavour, and their names in their simplest form will be treasured in the national memory. Both were Cheshire men, and the Bishop of Chester embodied the spirit of the impressive service under the famous Cathedral dome in an address which showed how the two mountaineers, now at rest in the most magnificent cenotaph in the world, were great climbers because they were great men full of courage, unselfishness and cheerfulness, men who had attained to great spiritual heights, men who had risked life itself in the service of others. Odell, who was in support, was climbing to Camp VI. on June 8 by a circuitous route. He discovered fossils in a band of limestone, and found himself enveloped in mist with clear sky above. By a mere chance he climbed a crag and emerged into a sudden temporary clearing of the mist to a vision of the summit ridge and peak of Everest. Far away on a snow slope near the base of the final pyramid he saw two figures climbing slowly towards their goal, one reaching out to help the other, then the mist fell again. The time was 12.50, and Mallory and Irvine were three hours late on their time schedule, yet they were pressing on. The chances are that they were speeding to the accomplishment of the little bit more which meant so much. Odell believes

they got to the summit and were benighted on the return journey. *Sic itur ad astra*. The sure record stands that Mallory and Irvine climbed to 28,230 feet with the help of oxygen. On another attempt, Norton and Somervell reached 28,130 feet without oxygen, and this presages a future success by a similar effort which will probably be made in 1926. Other records were Odell's three ascents between 25,000 and 27,000 feet within a week, the carriage by six porters of loads to a height of 27,000 feet; men have slept well in camp at 26,800 feet. The upper half of Everest consists of slabby altered limestones, a 1000-foot thickness of sandstone and fossils has been found, and in 1924 persistent cold winds blew from the west with night temperatures which fell once to  $-22^{\circ}$  F. At Camp IV., 23,000 feet, twice in June, the noon sun temperature was  $105^{\circ}$  F., while the air temperature was only  $29^{\circ}$  F.

THE broadcasting last week of the speeches of the leading politicians of Great Britain proves that the influence of radio communication on the lives and affairs of men is already very great. Mr. Reith, the manager of the British Broadcasting Company, in an article in the October *Quarterly Review*, gives an account of the present position of the art and indicates some possible future developments. In less than two years the staff has increased from 4 to 350, and operations are now carried out nightly in twenty cities. A system of simultaneous broadcasting has been carried out for more than a year, and practically a million licenses have been issued. There are very few "blind spots," that is, regions which suffer appreciably from shielding, due possibly to hills,