

horticultural press, and so long ago as the eighties of last century wrote a valuable series of articles on the Palmaceæ in the *Gardener's Chronicle*. These articles it was hoped might have been republished in book form as a monograph of this natural order, thereby bringing Berthold Seemann's work on the same family up-to-date. This hope, however, was never fulfilled. To vol. 15 of the *Annals of Botany* he contributed an illustrated paper "On the germination of *Bertholletia excelsa*," the Brazil nut.

In later years Watson took a keen interest in the Cactaceæ and succulent plants generally, and his "Cactus Culture for Amateurs" is the standard work on its subject. He also wrote books on "Climbing Plants," "Rhododendrons and Azaleas," and, in collaboration with W. J. Bean, "Orchids, their Culture and Management," all of which met with success. On horticulturists in general he conferred a great boon by editing a new edition of "Thompson's Gardener's Assistant," so much improving it that it became practically a new work. For upwards of twenty years he was editor of the garden section of the *Field*. His life's work, however, was centred in Kew, an institution which owes very much to his forty-three years' devoted service. He was elected an associate of the Linnean Society in 1904.

THE *Chemiker-Zeitung* reports the death on January 6, at the age of sixty-eight, of Dr. Wilhelm Borchers, professor of metallurgy and electrometallurgy at the

Technische Hochschule of Aix-la-Chapelle. Borchers was born at the university town of Erlangen, and after completing his studies there, he spent the next four years in a chemical factory as process chemist. The experience thus gained was of immense value to him in his later career as an investigator, for it enabled him to bring to a successful conclusion many difficult researches in the field of electrometallurgy. In 1891 he was appointed lecturer in chemistry and metallurgy at Duisburg, and six years later he was transferred to the Hochschule at Aix-la-Chapelle. His chief interest lay in the application of electrolytic processes to metallurgical problems, such as the production of metallic calcium, strontium, titanium, cerium, etc. He also conducted numerous researches on the preparation and properties of alloys. Prof. Borchers was the author of several books on electrochemistry, and in 1894 he founded the *Zeitschrift für Elektrochemie*, which he edited until 1900. He also collaborated with Nernst in publishing the *Jahrbuch der Elektrochemie*.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. Walther Dieckmann, of the Department of Chemistry in the University of Munich, on January 12, whilst carrying out a research in organic chemistry in the State laboratory.

Miss Lilian Suzette Gibbs, known for her work on the mountain flora of Australasia and on problems relating to the geographical distribution of plants.

Dr. E. E. Klein, F.R.S., formerly lecturer on advanced bacteriology in the Medical School, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, on February 9, aged eighty.

Current Topics and Events.

INTEREST in the therapeutics of consumption has again been roused by the reports of successful treatment, this time by a chemotherapeutic agent which, under the name of sanocrysin, has been investigated by Møllgaard, a professor in the Landbohojskole of Copenhagen. There is no mystery chemically about sanocrysin. It is sodium aurous thiosulphate ($\text{Na}_3\text{Au}(\text{S}_2\text{O}_3)_2$) which has long been known as Fordos and Geles salt. Years ago it was shown that gold salts have a powerful action on tubercle bacilli *in vitro* and several gold preparations, simple and complex, have been tried therapeutically with indifferent success. Møllgaard affirms that sanocrysin inhibits the growth of tubercle bacilli in a dilution of 1 : 1,000,000 and that their progress may be completely arrested in a concentration of 1 : 100,000. In non-tuberculous animals sanocrysin is said to be relatively harmless, whereas in tuberculous subjects very stormy reactions follow its exhibition and may actually end in death. It is believed by Møllgaard that these violent effects are to be attributed to certain poisons, of a tuberculin character, which are liberated from the dying and dead tubercle bacilli from the action of the sanocrysin rather than to a direct toxic action of the thiosulphate. It is said that the violent reactions can be lessened or prevented by the administration of an anti-serum produced by the injection of tubercle bacilli or its products. The sanocrysin treatment is really a twofold process. There is supposed to be the direct bactericidal action of sanocrysin and the neutralisa-

tion of its poisonous results by an antitoxin of sorts. The Møllgaard treatment has been applied for a considerable time both in cases of tuberculous human beings and animals, but judgment must at present be reserved as to whether it is likely to occupy a permanent place in tuberculo-therapy.

IN the course of his fourth talk on "Ether and Reality" given under the auspices of the British Broadcasting Company at the London station, 2LO, on February 17, Sir Oliver Lodge discussed magnetism and its analogies with life and knowledge. Sir Oliver stated that electrification is a matter of transfer, a transfer of pre-existent charges, a disturbance of equilibrium. When equilibrium is established, opposite charges are close together and disappear from our ken. They never go out of existence: we neither create nor destroy. The same is true for magnetism: we can make a magnet, but the magnetism was there beforehand. Magnetic lines of force differ from electric lines in being always closed loops; all we do is to open them out. They tend to shrink, and thereby pull together two things round which they are looped, like an indiarubber ring. They never shrink up to nothingness. One magnet can produce any number of others, for there is no limit to the amount of magnetisation; what one body gains, the other does not lose. In that respect it is analogous with life. Knowledge in this respect is like life and magnetism: there is an unlimited reservoir from