THE death is announced from America of Dr. Joseph Clark Hoppin, the well-known classical archæologist. Dr. Hoppin was a graduate of Harvard University, and at one time was professor of classical archæology in Bryn Mawr College, Philadelphia, but relinquished this post to devote himself to research. He was a student at the American School of Archæology at Athens in 1892-3, and took part in the excavations carried on in the Argive Heræum between the years 1892 and 1895. When the work of excavation came to an end, he took charge of the Department of Ceramics and was responsible for the examination and classification of the large quantity of pottery in the Museum at Athens which had been obtained from the Heræum site. His "Handbook of Attic Red-Figured Vases," a standard authority, appeared a few years ago, and his book on "Greek Black Figured Vases" appeared only at the end of last year. He had devoted himself for many years to the formation of a collection of classical antiquities, and it is said that his collection was perhaps the most complete of any in private hands in the United States. The value of his work had been recognised in Great Britain by election to honorary membership of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, an honour which he greatly appreciated. According to a sympathetic notice by one of his former colleagues in Athens, which appeared in the *Times* of February 4, he had projected further excavations, at his own expense, shortly before his illness, in the Argive Heræum.

THE *Chemiker Zeitung* records in a recent issue the life and work of Dr. Richard Escales, who died on September 9 at Munich. Dr. Escales' name will be remembered chiefly in connexion with his work on explosives. He was born on July 8, 1863, at Zweibrücken, where his father owned a textile factory. After studying at Würzburg, Munich, Erlangen, and Zurich, he graduated in 1886, and for a while was engaged in his father's business. Somewhat later he returned to Munich in order to undertake the study of explosives in the laboratory of Adolph von Baeyer, and in 1898 he discovered *ammonal*, a high explosive containing aluminium powder, which played a prominent part in the War. He sold the patent rights of this discovery for an inconsiderable sum in Vienna. In 1902 he founded an experimental station for explosives at Munich, where during the War he acted as director of the department of "Minenwerfer." He compiled a seven-volume standard work on explosives and was the founder and publisher of the *Zeitschrift für das gesamte Schiess- und Sprengstoffwesen*.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Dr. J. Cleland, F.R.S., from 1877 until 1909 professor of anatomy in the University of Glasgow, and afterwards emeritus professor, on March 5, aged eighty-nine.

Dr. Willet G. Miller, provincial geologist of Ontario, known for his work on the pre-Cambrian and economic geology of Ontario, on February 5, aged fifty-eight.

Dr. J. A. Ormerod, registrar since 1909 of the Royal College of Physicians, and Harveian Orator in 1908 and Lumleian Lecturer in 1914 of the College, on March 5, aged seventy-six.

Sir William Peck, Director of the Edinburgh City Observatory, Calton Hill, on March 7, aged sixty-three.

Dr. J. Ward, professor of mental philosophy and logic in the University of Cambridge since 1897, on March 4, aged eighty-two.

Current Topics and Events.

MUCH satisfaction is felt in scientific circles that the Prince of Wales has consented to occupy the presidential chair of the British Association for the meeting to be held at Oxford next year, either from July 28 to August 4, or from August 4 to August 11. At a meeting of the General Committee of the Association on Friday, March 6, Sir Ernest Rutherford, who was in the chair, reported that the Prince had intimated his willingness to accept the presidency; and he was, therefore, nominated by the Council to the Committee and elected unanimously. The Prince Consort was president of the Association for the meeting held at Aberdeen in 1859, but since then no other member of the Royal Family has filled that office. British science is greatly honoured by the consent of the Prince of Wales to act as president, and his knowledge of the resources and needs of the Empire is so extensive that whatever he may say in his address at the Oxford meeting will have wide influence upon both science and the community.

A PAPER by Sir Arthur Schuster, "On the Life Statistics of Fellows of the Royal Society," has just appeared in the Proceedings, and at last week's meeting of the Society the author himself gave an interesting summary of conclusions. Previously, the subject had been studied by General Strachey, who, in 1892, communicated a paper based on a statistical examination of the average age of the 15 fellows annually elected, their probable duration of life, relationship to an eventual maximum strength of fellowship, and other considerations. The point whether or not a small increase in the number of annual elections is required, in view of the larger scientific output of the country, has been discussed in recent years, but without bringing any change of procedure. The number of fellows of the Society at the beginning of 1848, when new statutes came in force, was 768. In consequence of the restriction in the number annually elected, this total was diminished by more than a hundred in the first ten years; by 1912 the maximum had become 455. Since then the numbers show a steady decline. On January 1, 1923, there were 439 fellows. As regards age at election, Sir Arthur remarks that it is difficult to gauge the effect of the War, but probably it was appreciable. His impression is that the younger men were kept back in their scientific work even when they were not actually in the field; while some of maturer age were substantially assisted in obtaining the fellowship by their War work. The youngest man elected into the Society since 1847 was John Lubbock (afterwards Lord Avebury), who entered at the age of twenty-four.