

how his first year almost daunted him with his realisation of the insufficiency of present knowledge. It was clear he was passing through his transition period, blending what he knew of three sciences into one harmonious whole. It was at this time he published his work on the bladders of *Utricularia*, which as a boy he had independently discovered as capturing their prey by active movement in response to stimuli. His thought henceforth was of his plant first, and this is well seen in his research on the sugar-cane froghopper blight in Trinidad. Here he was dealing with a pest not introduced but belonging to the forests of the island, only secondarily attacking the canes. Having studied his insects and his plant together as one entity, his advice to the planter is to attend with the greatest care to his cultivation, in particular to see that his canes have plenty of water physiologically available for their growth. "Canes do not necessarily show serious blight when froghoppers have been abundant, nor is an abundance of the insect a necessary condition for serious blight." Other research in Trinidad resulted in the discovery of a bollworm, *Sacadodes pyralis*, a moth, the life history of which was worked out, and much time was spent in studying and rearing successive generations of cotton stainers, *Dysdercus*, bugs which prefer cotton to their natural Malvaceous plants and stain and rot the cotton lint by the bacteria and fungoid spores they introduce.

Dr. Withycombe only came to Cambridge in August last, and he at once set to work on his material of froghoppers and *Dysdercus*. He had to prepare a course of advanced lectures, and he had a sub-department to get into order. As a lecturer he was almost conversational, as he had seen everything of which he spoke, and his class loved him. As a colleague we admired and loved him too, for he had a most lovable personality, quite extraordinary vision, and absolute devotion to research.

J. S. G.

MR. CHARLES HARDING, formerly an assistant in the Meteorological Office, died at Eastbourne on Sunday, Jan. 9, in his eighty-first year. Mr.

Harding entered the Meteorological Department of the Board of Trade in 1861, and was among those who transferred to the service of the Meteorological Committee when the Office was reconstructed in 1867 after the death of Admiral Fitzroy. He thus had experience of the Office under all the different forms of administration through which it had passed, with the exception of the most recent one of all under the Air Ministry. For some thirty years Mr. Harding was Principal Assistant in the Marine Division, and served under three Marine Superintendents, Captain Toynbee, Lieutenant Baillie, and Captain M. W. Campbell Hepworth. He retired in 1911, but returned during the War for part-time duty, and did not finally sever his connexion with the Office until 1920. His active career in the Office, therefore, extended over nearly sixty years. Mr. Harding became a fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society in 1874, and served on its council and as vice-president for many years. He was the author of a number of meteorological papers, dealing mainly with climatology or marine meteorology, published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Meteorological Society* and elsewhere. For some forty years he was a valued and regular contributor of notes and articles on meteorological subjects to the columns of NATURE.

WE regret to announce the following deaths :

Dr. Daniel Carhart, professor emeritus of civil engineering since 1908 at the University of Pittsburgh, on Dec. 8, aged eighty-seven years.

Dr. Forris Jewett Moore, until a year ago professor of organic chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, on Nov. 20, aged fifty-nine years.

Sir Isambard Owen, from 1909 until 1921 Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bristol, who took a leading part in the establishment of the University of Wales (1891-93) and in the reconstruction of the University of Durham (1907-9), on Jan. 14, aged seventy-six years.

Mr. F. J. Stoakley, for some fifty years chief assistant to the professor of chemistry at Cambridge, and well known to many generations of men who have worked in the Chemical Laboratory there, on Jan. 16, aged sixty-two years.

News and Views.

IN connexion with the reprint elsewhere in this issue (p. 125) of Clerk Maxwell's own abstract of his great memoir on the electrodynamic field, our attention has been directed by Sir Joseph Larmor to the valuable group of Maxwell letters that were discovered in 1903 among Stokes's private papers. They have been made public in the "Memoir and Scientific Correspondence of Sir George Stokes," vol. 2 (1907), pp. 1-45, published by the Cambridge University Press. They are an intimate account, reporting progress in a personal way from time to time in most of his scientific activity throughout his life. These and like collections of letters, from many of the most prominent workers of the time, all preserved by Stokes, make the two volumes an almost indispensable

prolegomena to the history of discovery in physical science during the latter half of last century. A very interesting account of Maxwell's early years is contained in an obituary notice written by Tait for the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and printed in NATURE, vol. 21.

PROF. G. ELLIOT SMITH has announced in the *Times* of Jan. 14 an interesting discovery which he says "should settle once for all the century-old controversy regarding the identification of certain elephant-like creatures represented . . . in Mexico, Central America, and elsewhere in the New World." Mr. J. Eric Thompson has just discovered in the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago unpublished