

much to popularise British botany. The Report for 1930, issued last August, after his eightieth birthday, is a testimony to his remarkable energy and virility, recording, as it does, excursions to widely distant parts of the British Isles and a visit to Cyprus.

Not the least interesting fact in Druce's career was his association with the University of the city in which he had his business. Oxford accepted him and honoured him. A botanist visiting a University official (not on the science side) was asked, "You know *our* botanist—Mr. Druce?" In 1895 he was appointed Curator of the Fielding Herbarium and attached to Magdalen College with an honorary M.A. degree. Many years later he was awarded the D.Sc. In association with the professor of botany, Dr. S. H. Vines, he published accounts of two of the historic Oxford Herbaria, the Dillenian in 1907, and the Morisonian in 1919.

Druce's botanical travels were not confined to the British Isles. He had a good personal acquaintance with the European flora, especially of the Mediterranean area. In 1914 he was in Australia with the British Association, and he had also visited South America.

Druce was a good citizen—a member of the City Council, sheriff (1897), and mayor (1900). He had also served as president of the British Pharmaceutical Conference. Writers in the public press have borne testimony to his unsparing readiness to advise and help students of the British flora, however humble, and his wide circle of friends and the remarkable response to the memorial presented on his eightieth birthday testified to the esteem and affection in which he was held. Druce had his foibles. He dearly loved a title. He did not

scruple to strain a point to enable him to write *mihi* after a plant-name. His handwriting was execrable: a regrettable and life-long quarrel arose partly from an honest but unsuccessful attempt by an editor to transliterate a botanical communication from him. He had the true collector's spirit—the impulse to get in first.

A remarkable man, Druce has made a noteworthy contribution to British botany by his personal influence, by his published floristic works, and by the rich herbarium and library which he has left with his house and an endowment as a Botanical Institute for the use of botanists. His election to the fellowship of the Royal Society in 1927 was a graceful and appropriate recognition of his work.

A. B. RENDLE.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Prof. Alexander Dougall Blackader, emeritus professor of therapeutics and pharmacology in McGill University, Montreal, past president of the Canadian Medical Association, on March 14, aged eighty-five years.

Prof. D. H. Marshall, emeritus professor of mathematics and physics in Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, on March 14, aged eighty-four years.

Prof. Giuseppe Martinelli, assistant secretary of the Pontifical Academy of Science, Vatican City, and assistant in the Royal Central Office of Meteorology and Geophysics, Rome, aged fifty-four years.

Prof. Henry J. Priestley, professor of mathematics in the University of Queensland, Brisbane, on Feb. 26, aged forty-eight years.

News and Views

John Hunter

MR. WILFRED TROTTER gave the Hunterian Oration at the Royal College of Surgeons on Feb. 15, and his oration stands out among the long series as remarkable for the amount of interesting chronological analogies and psychological questioning which he has managed to compress into twelve pages. His best point is bringing out the fact that Hunter achieved his results, making modern, in fact, the practice of surgery, at a time when most of the discoveries of science on which we now rely had still to come. During his life, 1728-93, the biologist could look for little help from the sciences of the inorganic. The work of Cavendish, Priestley, Galvani, Volta, and Lavoisier was still to come. He would have had to wait ten years for Priestley's discovery of oxygen in 1775, and more than sixty for Wöhler's synthesis of urea and the foundation of biochemistry in 1828. Joule's mechanical equivalent of heat came nearly eighty years later. Joseph Jackson Lister's compound microscope was sixty years ahead, and Lister's greater son did not make clear the nature of wound infections until just a century after Hunter. All this

enhances enormously the merit of Hunter. He stands out the more clearly as one of those successful practitioners of science, who by untiring work, scrupulous accuracy, and perfect devotion to truth have worked marvels.

Purpose of Commemorations

MR. TROTTER's remarks, however, on the practice of commemorating the eminent dead, seem to us somewhat to obscure the main point of such commemorations by the curious psychological data which he suggests. There is a Freudian touch about it which, true as it may be genetically, is ontologically now invalid. Because primitive man did sacrifices to appease the 'manes' of the departed and was in actual fear of his ghost, it does not follow that there is any such dread of the reappearance of Hunter. His ghost would, we are sure, have been most cordially welcomed at Mr. Trotter's discourse on Feb. 15. Admiration as well as perfect love casteth out fear. Nor does the ancient practice of partaking of the bodily remains of the dead hero now prompt us to any really analogous act. We commemorate to