

Goebel's volume a most valuable addition to philosophical botany.

The production of von Goebel's "Organographie der Pflanzen", with its three progressive editions, has been a very great achievement. So large a book is in danger of suffering from the wealth of its material. When a work runs to more than 2,000 large pages, with above 2,000 illustrations, there is a risk of its becoming encyclopædic, and of its use being as a book of reference rather than a work to be read directly through. This may be but a confession of weakness in the user. As a summation of the living morphology of the time, critically stated, von Goebel's "Organographie" stands unrivalled, whether as the achievement of a single brain, or as an epitome of the work of a long life of intense activity, and of unusual opportunity. Nothing like it has appeared before in the literature of botany.

Von Goebel has been a *persona grata* in his frequent visits to Great Britain. This was due partly to his own personality, partly to the character of his work, and partly it was a consequence of his command of the English language. His first introduction to British readers as a body was through his revision of the systematic section of Sachs's textbook, the translation of which was published by the Oxford University Press, under the title of "Outlines of Classification and Special Morphology of Plants" (1887). This was followed by the translation of the first edition of his "Organographie der Pflanzen" (1900-1905), both being edited by Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour. These books readily reached the hands of advanced British students: but for those engaged in morphological research von Goebel's more special writings have been for more than half a century indispensable: not only have they provided a wealth of new facts, but they have also been more influential than those of any other current writer in shaping the course of morphological inquiry.

Prof. von Goebel was born in 1855, at Billigheim in Baden. He was tall and robust in figure, but with a face that suggested gentleness of character, combined with a dreamy expression of the eyes. He was, however, firm in his opinions, and resolute in their support. Nevertheless his manner in controversy was restrained, and tinged sometimes with humour. This came out particularly in his use of well-chosen classical quotations, applied so as to soften the otherwise keen point of an argument. He leaves behind the memory of a gracious personality, to whom the science of botany owes a supreme debt not only as a great observer, but also as a safe guide to correct channels of thought.

F. O. B.

MR. A. CHASTON CHAPMAN, F.R.S.

CHEMISTRY sustained a severe loss in the death on October 17, at sixty-three years of age, of Alfred Chaston Chapman, one of the remaining chemists of a type that is disappearing. A consulting chemist and public analyst with a large

and important practice, up to the last he was indefatigable in the pursuit of his scientific studies, and this in spite of the many calls on his time arising from the public duties and the many voluntary services he undertook.

Chapman received his training in chemistry at University College under Williamson, and remained in close touch with that College when Ramsay succeeded as professor. While quite young he started for himself as a consulting chemist, specialising in the fermentation industries, and soon acquired a position which was enhanced by his published work. An excellent organic chemist, he investigated the constituents of the essential oil of hops, some of them in great detail, such as humulene, and applied the same methods to the identification of a new hydrocarbon (spinacene) present in large quantity in certain fish liver oils. In the domain of general analytical work he contributed many useful processes; he was alive to the application of new chemical reagents and methods, to which he devoted a lecture to the Chemical Society, and in this connexion strongly advocated setting up chairs of analytical chemistry in the universities, on account of the range of discipline and chemical experience afforded by that subject.

Equally interested in life processes—he never ceased to marvel at the "wonderful laboratory of the yeast cell"—Chapman devoted much time to mycological and bacteriological work, evolving processes which required this technique. Some of this he described in special papers and an account of his views on the industrial uses of micro-organism will be found in his Cantor Lectures before the Royal Society of Arts. These studies led him to advocate with his usual cogency the setting up of an Institute for Industrial Microbiology, in which would be carried on systematic research and training, together with the formation of a collection of pure cultures. Although this has not materialised, his advice as a member of the Chemistry Research Board of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was valued in connexion with a start that is being made towards the fulfilment of some of these objects. In 1920 he was elected into the Royal Society.

Many institutions sought the advantage of Chapman's sound judgment of men and things. Thus he had held the offices of president of the Institute of Chemistry, of the Society of Public Analysts, of the Royal Microscopical Society, of the Institute of Brewing, and he was vice-president and benefactor of the Royal Institution. Of his assistance to Governmental committees, examples are his membership of the Royal Commission of Awards to Inventors, the scientific panel of the Board of Trade, Advisory Committee of the Imperial Institute, and the Forest Products and Chemistry Research Boards of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Among Chapman's activities was his interest in the antiquarian side of chemistry, and he delighted

to show to his friends and describe with detailed knowledge his library of books relating to the time when the Royal Society was founded and the succeeding century.

Chaston Chapman will be remembered as a cogent writer and exponent of his views, but his friends have to lament the loss of one whose striking and dignified figure, kindly humour and uniform graciousness endeared him to so many.

ROBERT ROBERTSON.

WE regret to announce the following deaths :

Prof. Louis Duparc, professor of mineralogy and petrography, analytical chemistry and toxicology

at the University of Geneva, a foreign member of the Geological Society of London, known chiefly for his work in mineralogy, on October 21, aged sixty-six years.

Dr. Barton W. Evermann, director of the Museum and the Steinhart Aquarium of the California Academy of Sciences, who has published much work on ichthyology, especially with relation to the geographical distribution of fishes, on September 27, aged seventy-eight years.

Prof. K. K. Gedroiz, director of the Experimental Station of the Scientific Institute of Fertilisers, Moscow, a well known worker in soil science, on October 5.

News and Views

Diary of Societies

ANNOUNCEMENTS of meetings of scientific societies, and lists of papers to be read, have increased so greatly in recent years that it has become necessary to reconsider the claims which such particulars may reasonably make upon the space they have hitherto occupied in the "Diary of Societies" in NATURE. From the point of view of interest, it may be doubted whether weekly lists of meetings and papers running to three columns or more merit publication. In most cases fellows of societies receive such announcements direct, and the chief advantage of including the lists in our "Diary" is that fellows of other societies may see what is coming on, and may wish to attend meetings outside their own special societies. Several difficulties arise, however, even on this assumption. Meetings of scientific and technical societies are usually not open to visitors, and often a dozen or more papers may be announced in a list though only one or two papers may be actually read, the rest being read in title only.

Announcements and Reports

IF it is suggested that full lists of papers serve a useful purpose as indicating directions of scientific activity, then the question arises why such lists should be limited to London and some provincial centres. NATURE is an international organ of science, and might just as appropriately publish weekly lists of papers communicated to national scientific societies and academies outside Great Britain. Under "Societies and Academies", we record the proceedings of many such societies, giving short summaries of papers received, while our columns of "Research Items" direct attention to subjects of particular interest or importance. There is thus little justification for devoting excessive space to announcements of ordinary meetings and lists of papers, and we propose in future to include under the title of "Forthcoming Events" only special meetings, lectures, and discussions, or meetings at which single papers or topics having much the same character as that of lectures are being presented. In adopting this plan, we have in mind not only considerations of space but also the interests of the majority of the readers of NATURE

abroad as well as at home; and we need scarcely add that any suggestions as to what might be usefully included or excluded from this new scheme, bearing these two points in mind, would be much appreciated.

The Shirley Institute

SOME anxiety regarding the future of the Shirley Institute was expressed at the annual meeting of the British Cotton Industry Research Association at Didsbury, Manchester, held on October 19. These misgivings were not about the ability of the Institute to continue to carry out fruitful investigations but about the necessary financial support. The Institute has a staff of two hundred, more than sixty of whom are university graduates, and Dr. R. H. Pickard expressed the opinion that the Institute could usefully employ at least twice as many people as at present on the investigation of scientific and technical problems to which the industry requires answers. The work on investigating current trade problems has grown to such an extent as to crowd out much of the fundamental research, and only one sixth of the work is now the long distance research upon which the future of the Association and the industry so largely depends. Financial arrangements made in connexion with the Rayon Department terminate next June and those for the Cotton Department in June 1934. With the exhaustion of the £1,000,000 fund, Government grants to the Association will in future come by annual vote and may accordingly be still further decreased through the need for public economy. The Institute costs about £65,000 a year to run and there is a deficit on the past year of £5,600, largely owing to a corresponding reduction in the Government grant. Only about £25,000 comes from the subscriptions of the 1,200 firms who are members of the Association and these subscriptions were described by the chairman, Mr. H. P. Greg, as ridiculously out of proportion to the size and importance of the cotton industry even in times of bad trade. Contributions of £10 from a firm with a capital of £100,000 or 50,000 spindles, or of £5 from a manufacturer with 1,000 looms are unworthy of the industry or of the results obtained.