

synangia, groups of sporangia borne on the surface of a leaf-like structure, or organs resembling the male flowers of the poplar. Nothing is known of a fertile leaf like that envisaged in the classical morphology. The study of these forms, however, suggests that angiospermous flowers may have originated in more than one way.

When we examine the forms of expanded leaves throughout the past, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that 'compound' leaves are of a more primitive type than 'simple' leaves. In certain cases, however (for example, the Date palm), a new type of compound leaf has probably arisen from a simple form.

In other branches of science the interpretation

of observed facts is facilitated by making successive assumptions and by comparing the theoretical results of each with the observations already made. This procedure has not been followed in plant morphology. The old system provided one set of assumptions only, founded more than a century ago on a very imperfect knowledge of the plant world, and for many years endeavours have been made to harmonise our ever-increasing observations with these postulates, distorting or discarding all those facts which seemed inconsistent. While it is quite probable that the assumptions of the new morphology may prove to need drastic emendation, they may nevertheless serve a useful purpose in the study of plant evolution.

### Obituary

MR. H. A. ROBERTS

MR. H. A. ROBERTS, secretary for thirty years of the Appointments Board of the University of Cambridge, died at Cambridge on December 18 at the age of sixty-eight years. After ten years as senior mathematical master at Bath College he returned to Cambridge as a coach in mathematics in 1898. But his life's real work began when he was appointed in 1902 to be secretary of the University Appointments Board. He was keen to develop a new line of openings for university graduates in business and administrative posts, in addition to the more obviously natural academic, professional and technical positions which most men then sought after graduation. By great care in the selection of the men whom he recommended to the firms which applied to the Board, he not only succeeded in overcoming a prejudice against university men in business but he also created a new demand for such men on the part of large industrial undertakings.

Thirty years of devoted service on Mr. Roberts's part brought their own reward in intimate and friendly relations with the heads of industry, with their younger successors who had gone into business under his auspices, and with generations of college tutors, with whom he always worked in the closest touch. Gonville and Caius College elected Mr. Roberts as a Fellow in 1927, his advice was sought in Government circles and in the formation of appointments boards at other universities and for the women's colleges at Cambridge. He retired on account of ill-health only last autumn. It is sad that he should have lived so short a time to enjoy his hard-won leisure, but it is something that he was able to attend, less than a fortnight before his death, a complimentary dinner at which a presentation was made to him on his retirement by a number of those whom he had served so well.

MR. A. R. WRIGHT

MR. A. R. WRIGHT, who died on December 24 at the age of seventy years, played an

important part in organising the work of the examining staff of the Patent Office to its present high level of efficiency and was also a recognised authority on folk-lore.

Wright entered the Patent Office in 1885 and from that date until his retirement forty-two years later worked unremittingly to place the classification of patent specifications for search purposes on a sure foundation. He was the editor of the well-known official series of illustrated class abridgment volumes which were published at the rate of more than fifty volumes a year to cover, by the year 1905, all patent specifications issued up to that time from 1855. The classification scheme on which this mass of material was indexed and through which alone the official search for novelty introduced by the Patents Act of 1902 was made possible, was largely Wright's work, and its amplification in subsequent years to meet the ever-growing amount of search material in the examiners' files and the development of industries and industrial processes was carried out under his personal supervision with a thoroughness and care for detail which were characteristic of the man.

The Patent Office classification as it stands to-day, exceptional in many respects, deserves a high place among the several developed classifications of applied science, and is a worthy memorial to Wright's energy and capacity. He was appointed assistant-comptroller of the Patent Office in 1922, while still retaining the classification as his main charge, and retired from the service in 1927.

As a folklorist, Wright was known not so much for his literary output, which was not large, as for his encyclopædic knowledge of folk beliefs and customs, obtained by extensive reading and an unusually retentive memory, which was ever at the disposal of anyone seeking information, and for the valuable services he rendered through the Folk-Lore Society, of which he became a member in 1890. He was a prominent and active member of the Council of the Society from 1898 until his death, and president for the two years 1927 and 1928, while he was an invaluable editor of the Society's journal *Folk-Lore* from 1912 until 1931.

At the time of his death, Wright was engaged in editing for the Folk-Lore Society the English material which had been gathered together, mainly by his own labours, for a collection of British calendar customs which the Society had decided to publish. All folklorists will regret that his invaluable help and advice have been withdrawn at a time when they were most needed, but this should only be an added spur to see that the task to which he had given so much time and work is completed. Wright was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and had many outside interests ranging from the collection of Utopias to the Shakespearian productions of the Old Vic Theatre, which he attended with unflinching regularity until his last illness.

#### MR. G. STEPHENSON

MR. GEORGE STEPHENSON, who died in Letchworth on December 29, in his seventieth year, was for many years the principal of the Albert Agricultural College, Glasnevin, and lecturer on agricultural chemistry in the Royal College of Science, Dublin. He was born in Yorkshire in 1863, and was educated for the teaching profession, but soon turned to the study of chemistry and physics in their applications to agriculture. He gained a national scholarship and went to the old Royal College of Science at South Kensington, where he studied under Sir Arthur Rücker, Sir Edward Thorpe and Sir Norman Lockyer. He was a student during the years 1887-1889, and was deeply impressed by the lectures and practical classes, and he retained his notes during his whole life. With Sir Norman Lockyer he carried out some spectrographic research, and he would show with pride the photographs he made at that time.

After leaving South Kensington Mr. Stephenson

became science master at Cheadle Hulme School, and later joined the staff of the Agricultural Department of the University of Leeds, but shortly afterwards he accepted an invitation to join that of the Royal College of Science, Dublin, which had been reorganised by the Technical Department presided over by the late Sir Horace Plunkett.

A few years later whilst retaining his lectureship Mr. Stephenson was appointed principal of the Albert Agricultural College, which had been opened in the middle of the last century by the Prince Consort. Here he found the congenial work of teaching and training students, many of whom in every part of Ireland, in Great Britain and throughout the Empire have done most important and useful work for agriculture.

Mr. Stephenson, though a strict disciplinarian where order and method were concerned, was above all things a sympathetic teacher and was never so happy as when helping students, individually, when necessary, with their difficulties. Being a man of wide reading and culture his lectures often extended far beyond the usual curriculum. His students will remember him with love and gratitude, and will regret the passing of so kind and great a teacher. He leaves a number of devoted friends, who will regard his memory as one of their cherished possessions. S. S.

WE regret to announce the following deaths :

Sir John Ballinger, C.B.E., formerly librarian of the National Library of Wales, who did much work in connexion with the organisation of school and village libraries, on January 8, aged seventy-two years.

Mr. G. S. Kemp, who was the Marchese Marconi's first assistant in his first demonstrations of wireless telegraphy, on January 2, aged seventy-five years.

### News and Views

#### British Association : New President Installed

ON January 6, the usual meetings of organising sectional committees of the British Association were held to decide the lines of the programme of the Leicester meeting next September. As under a new statute the annual office of president of the Association corresponds with the calendar year, occasion was taken to welcome Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins to the chair. Sir Alfred Ewing, the retiring president, in introducing the new president, said that the Association has been fortunate in securing Sir Frederick Hopkins's services. Last year it had been, so to speak, the turn of that part of science which dealt with the constitution of non-living matter, and with purely mechanical processes, which can certainly kill, but cannot make alive. Now the Association turns, perhaps with relief and greater hope, to the still more difficult science of life—of the fascinating problems of which no one can speak with

more authority and clearer discernment than Sir Frederick Hopkins. Sir Alfred stated that it seems not unlikely, and probably it is desirable, that in future meetings of the Association, scientific workers will make a more conscious effort to relate their studies to social problems. Science is now playing so large a part in human life, both for good and for evil, that scientific workers cannot logically stand aloof. Science has brought new powers and new dangers—grave dangers of which the community is scarcely yet aware. It is clearly the duty of science to point these out. After his installation, Sir Frederick Hopkins said that Sir Alfred can be well pleased with his tenure of office and with the delivery at York of an address which in many minds stimulated thought along desirable lines on the readjustment of science and civilisation. Sir Alfred is retiring from office in the full assurance that he has helped the Association greatly.