

as a bryologist. The herbarium of Robert Paulson has been presented by his widow. It contains more than six hundred flowering plants, but its value is in its 269 British and 200 foreign lichens, for Mr. Paulson was one of our best known amateur lichenologists. Mr. A. H. G. Alston, assistant keeper in the Department, recently visited southern Albania in company with Mr. N. Y. Sandwith, of the Kew Herbarium. About 550 numbers were obtained. The Lunxheriës Mountains and Mount Tomori were explored, and further collections were made about Voskopoj. A visit to Gur-i-Topit was forbidden by the authorities because of a revolution. The main interest in the collection is that it was made at a late season of the year when little exploration has been done in the region. It also supplements the previous collections made in Albania by these botanists. The herbarium of Maurice Depierre has been purchased. It consists of about 23,000 specimens representing the flora of Mont Blanc and the other mountains in the Haute Savoie, collected in the first half of the last century. It contains specimens collected by the Curé's friends, MM. Puget and Chevalier, and some of the labels are made out or verified by the celebrated Prof. Reuter, who published a catalogue of the plants of Geneva.

#### Trees and Health

As the subject of his Chadwick Public Lecture on October 23, Mr. R. St. Barbe Baker discussed "The Contribution of Trees to National Health and Efficiency". He commenced by tracing the history of trees on the globe, showing that in early times trees of certain species were regarded as sacred, a superstition of man—if indeed it were a superstition—which survives to the present day, since many jungle races still worship the forests, or trees in the forests. Mr. Baker correctly states that man has been a destroyer of trees and the forest for a long period in his history. This destruction in the early days of man was justified to enable him to obtain space for pasturing his flocks and raising crops; with the increase in numbers, however, the destruction and wasteful utilisation of the forest proceeded apace, resulting in the disappearance of ancient civilisations owing to the former prosperous lands becoming a desert. As Mr. Baker shows, this wanton waste of the resources of the earth is continuing at an increased pace, owing to the greater demands being made upon the lands for agriculture and other purposes by an increasing population at the expense of the forest. Mr. Baker's remarks on the subject of the French and British in West Africa concerning the forests and the advance of the Sahara are somewhat misleading. The French are in fact carrying out forestry work of considerable importance and high technique in West Africa. In Nigeria a very considerable recognition exists of the problems connected with agricultural methods, forests, the increasing desiccation, and so forth.

Two other points in connexion with Mr. Baker's lecture are worthy of note. Under certain conditions,

trees and the health of man are closely connected. In most of the temperate parts of the world under salubrious conditions of land and climate this is true. Mr. Baker must, however, be aware that in certain parts of the globe it is far from the truth. Medical opinion in West Africa, for example, now holds that sleeping sickness due to the tsetse fly is increased by the presence of trees on the ground. Large belts of trees around towns and along main roads are now felled, and the area kept clean with the object of reducing the disease. Generalities are always dangerous. Many have welcomed the 'Men of the Trees' and the effort the Society stands for. At times, however, Mr. Baker would seem to forget that a Forestry Commission has been established in Great Britain and has now been carrying out excellent afforestation work for some fifteen years; also that many landowners throughout the country possess parks containing beautiful trees. It is not that the love of the tree is not deeply implanted in the British peoples. The trouble arises from the fact that the general public does not know or understand how to raise young trees. One has only to look at the trees upon some of the arterial roads to realise that there is little use in planting trees in Great Britain unless proper provision is made for their supervision. It would be a fine thing if the members of the Society which Mr. Baker represents would, individually, plant twenty-five trees on Armistice Day in this Jubilee year. But who is going to look after these trees for say the next fifteen years? Without such attention, how many will be alive at the end of two to three years? If the 'Men of the Trees' can solve the question of how young trees, planted in public localities in Great Britain, are to be properly tended until they have reached a size and height beyond the ordinary dangers to which the young standards are exposed, we shall be on the road to replacing in our generation what our forefathers have given us in the wonderful old trees to be found in this island.

#### Births and Deaths in England and Wales, 1934

PART I, consisting of Tables (Medical), of the Registrar-General's Statistical Review of 1934 has just been published (London: H.M. Stationery Office. 6s. net). The number of live births in England and Wales registered in the year was 597,642, giving a birth-rate of 14.8 per 1,000 persons living. This rate was 0.4 above that for 1933, which was the lowest ever recorded. The death-rate was 11.8 per 1,000 persons living, 0.5 below the rate for 1933. When allowance is made for the fact that the average age of the living population is increasing every year, the resulting corrected or standardised death-rate was the lowest ever recorded both for men and for women, the rate for the sexes together being just half of the corresponding rate in 1881-90. Mortality from infectious and parasitic diseases in general reached a low record of 1.3 per 1,000, notwithstanding increases for scarlet fever and diphtheria, and the tuberculosis rate declined once again to a new low record of 763 per million. Pneumonia gave the lowest rate save in 1930, which was also a very healthy year. The