

isolation of some new sterols from the unsaponifiable matter of wheat-germ oil by fractionation by adsorption on a column of aluminium oxide; the fraction of unsaponifiable matter used was assumed to contain vitamin E.

Prof. Charles Fabry, For.Mem.R.S.

AFTER fifty years devoted to teaching and research, Prof. Charles Fabry is retiring from the chair he has held in the Sorbonne, Paris. In his scientific career, Prof. Ch. Fabry has been pre-eminent for his work in optics. His interferometric work, with his determination (with Pérot and Benoit) of the length of the standard metre in wave-lengths of the monochromatic radiation of cadmium, has long been classical. His studies on the spectrum of the iron arc, his pioneer work on the mercury arc lamp, and on the application of interferometry to spectroscopic research must also be recalled. To a somewhat later period belong his researches in photometry and astrophysics. The microphotometer he designed with Prof. H. Buisson, and his studies on photographic density also represent pioneer work in a field which has since seen a wide development along the lines he predicted. During recent years, Prof. Fabry's interest has turned towards meteorological optics. Under his direction, researches on the composition of the upper atmosphere and its ozone content are being carried on by a group of his pupils. Soon after the Great War, Prof. Fabry founded in Paris the Institut d'Optique, of which he is still director. The activity of this institution has been devoted to industrial optics as well as to scientific investigation, to teaching and to the designing of optical parts as well as to research. The *Revue d'Optique*, also founded by Prof. Fabry, is published by the Institut d'Optique.

PROF. FABRY is also a brilliant writer and a lecturer of no ordinary skill. His text-books on electricity, thermodynamics, photometry, written in an exceptionally lucid style, are classics in the French universities. As a lecturer he was, at the Sorbonne, unrivalled; generations of students have listened to his witty and genial lectures and marvelled at the clarity and directness of his exposition. He is also well known in English-speaking scientific circles and is a foreign member of the Royal Society. He has delivered the Guthrie Lecture and Thomas Young Oration before the Physical Society; he is an honorary member of many scientific bodies, and recently has been elected president of the International Council of Scientific Unions. The scientific jubilee of Prof. Fabry will be celebrated by a meeting to be held at the Sorbonne some time between November 23 and December 5, and the committee dealing with the arrangements has also approved the design of a Fabry Jubilee Medal, a replica of which can be obtained from the Secretary and Treasurer of the Committee, Prof. G. A. Boutry, Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers, 292 rue St.-Martin, Paris (3ème). It is also hoped to be able to publish in volume form some of Prof. Fabry's works, selected from his classical memoirs and from his unprinted researches.

Dr. Eric Ashby

DR. ERIC ASHBY, reader in botany in the University of Bristol since 1935, has been appointed to the chair of botany in the University of Sydney, Australia, in succession to Prof. T. G. B. Osborn. After leaving the City of London School, Dr. Ashby entered the Imperial College of Science in 1923, graduating in 1925. From this time dates the origin of his original investigations, which have been pursued steadily along two main lines: a quantitative study of the effects of the environmental factors and their interactions on the growth of *Lemna*, and the analysis of hybrid vigour. Papers on both these topics have appeared in the *Annals of Botany*. In 1929 he secured a Commonwealth fellowship and widened his scientific outlook by two years work in the United States. Shortly after his return he was awarded the D.Sc. of the University of London. Dr. Ashby has played a prominent part in the development of a quantitative ecology and has surveyed this subject in botanical reviews. His highly individual view on the nature of heterosis has aroused general interest if not general approbation. His point of view is succinctly expressed in a contribution to the Royal Society on the theory of heterosis. Dr. Ashby has served botanical science in various capacities on the councils of the Linnean and Ecological Societies, and as the joint secretary of the Society of Experimental Biologists. His great talents and enterprise have gained due recognition in securing at the early age of thirty-three years an appointment of such distinction.

Geological Society: Foreign Fellows and Correspondents

At its meeting on November 3, the Geological Society of London elected as Foreign Fellows, Dr. W. A. J. M. van Waterschoot van der Gracht, Dr. W. J. Jongmans, Dr. A. Renier, and Dr. F. E. Wright, and as Foreign Correspondents, Prof. N. L. Bowen, Prof. R. M. Field, Baron F. von Huene, and Prof. H. Stille. Dr. W. A. J. M. van Waterschoot van der Gracht, of Heerlen, has made important contributions to our knowledge of the underground geology of the Netherlands, and has also published papers on economic geology, including coal and petroleum. More recently he has devoted attention to tectonic geology with special reference to North America. His review of the theory of continental drift formed the introduction to a symposium on that subject which was published by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. He was director of the Rijksopsporing van Delfstoffen until 1917, and has been a Fellow of the Geological Society of London since 1898. Dr. W. J. Jongmans, director of the Geological Bureau of the Netherlands at Heerlen, has added much to the knowledge of Carboniferous stratigraphy. His publications on Carboniferous plants are well known, particularly those dealing with the genus *Calamites*. He is editor of the botanical section of *Fossilium Catalogus*, and was responsible for the volumes in that series dealing with the Equisetales and Lycopodiales. Dr. A. Renier, director of the Geological Survey of Belgium, has