

on feeding and management, and on methods of breeding. In urban distribution, it was pointed out that the consumer is suffering under a surfeit of retailers, many of whom could be dispensed with, and of 'services' many of which are quite superfluous with properly processed milk. If surplus retailers and these costly but unnecessary services could be dispensed with, consumer prices could be reduced. But without monopoly in some form or another, it is not easy to see how a stable scheme for effective and minimum-cost distribution could be brought about. It was suggested that, instead of further verbal discussion of hypothetical alternatives, some experiments on different types

of monopoly control, for example, municipal, co-operative, public utility, private firm, ought to be tried out under careful supervision in limited areas. But this type of experiment cannot take place without legislation.

From the events of this most interesting day, one point emerges very clearly. This Division of the British Association by its very nature cannot proceed far without becoming involved, and involved very deeply, in politics and in active social planning. While this is well understood by the officers of the Division, it seemed to be somewhat of a revelation to several of those others who attended the Reading meeting.

## Obituary Notices

### Miss Dorothea F. M. Pertz

**D**ORA PERTZ, who died on March 6, a few days before reaching her eightieth birthday, was born in 1859 into a cosmopolitan, intellectual milieu, for which it would be difficult to-day to find a parallel. Her father was Dr. G. H. Pertz, a scholar of world-wide repute, and Royal Librarian in Berlin. His first wife was a brilliant Englishwoman, who counted Sismondi and Lafayette among her friends. His second wife, Dora's mother, also an Englishwoman, was one of a remarkable group of sisters, the six daughters of Leonard Horner, a prominent early member of the Geological Society, and twice its president. He was evidently a man of unusual breadth of view, for though he was born at so remote a date as 1785, he was sufficiently open-minded to commend Darwin's speculations in his last address to the Geological Society in 1861. Horner's eldest daughter was married to Sir Charles Lyell, and his second daughter to Sir Charles J. F. Bunbury, a botanist, who, under Lyell's influence, turned his attention to fossil plants.

Among the Horners, scientific enthusiasm was by no means confined to the men. Dora Pertz's grandmother helped her husband with his rock collections, and when the meetings of the Geological Society were first thrown open to women visitors, Dora's aunts, Lady Lyell and her sisters, were constant in their attendance, though otherwise few women cared to avail themselves of this privilege. Katharine Horner, who married Lyell's brother, and eventually became the biographer of her father and her brothers-in-law, was a botanist. She published in 1870 "A Geographical Handbook of Ferns"—a highly technical catalogue dealing with the distribution of this group. Of Sir Charles Lyell, in his Harley Street period, Dora had certain childish recollections, especially of occasions when he would call a hansom cab and carry off his two small nieces for rapturous visits to the Zoo. Love of animals was throughout Dora's life a ruling passion, and her youthful memory of

visiting the Darwins at Down, centred in the joy of being allowed to caress the nose of the horse on which Charles Darwin was riding, in his cloak and broad-brimmed hat.

When her father died, Dora Pertz went with her mother and sister to live in Florence, but, after some years in Italy, the family urge towards science brought her to England in 1882, in order to enter Newnham College. Having taken honours in the Natural Sciences Tripos, she continued to work at Cambridge, doing research in plant physiology under the direction of Francis Darwin, who was then a member of the staff of the Botany School. Dora Pertz co-operated in much of his work, and also produced several independent papers. The best known of their joint memoirs is probably that "On the Artificial Production of Rhythm in Plants", published in the *Annals of Botany* of 1892. She also did some genetical work in the days when that study was just beginning at Cambridge, and collaborated with William Bateson in a paper on inheritance in *Veronica*.

After Sir Francis Darwin's retirement, Dora Pertz continued for a time to make observations; but she came to recognize that the plant physiology of the twentieth century was developing on lines widely divergent from those on which she had been educated, and that it demanded a grasp of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, which she did not possess. With characteristic clear-sightedness as to her own limitations, she desisted from attempting to do research for which her equipment was inadequate, and she sought for some other means through which she could be of use to botany. Fortunately, Dr. F. F. Blackman was able to enlist her services in cataloguing pamphlets, and in making an elaborate index of the papers of plant physiological interest in the numerous early volumes of the *Biochemische Zeitschrift* and the *Zeitschrift der physiologischen Chemie*. She completed the index up to the year 1935; the magnitude of the task may be judged

from the fact that in the *Biochemische Zeitschrift* alone she had to deal with 268 volumes. A letter of appreciation of this work from the members of the staff of the Sub-Department of Plant Physiology gave her special pleasure in her last illness. Concurrently with the work on the index, she found scope for her considerable powers of draughtsmanship in making all the illustrations for a long series of papers on floral anatomy published by her friend Miss E. R. Saunders, between the years 1923 and 1936.

Over a very long period—indeed until the failure of her health brought all activities to a close—Dora Pertz was content to give her time with complete steadiness and regularity to indexing and drawing, though these somewhat mechanical occupations could not, in the nature of things, have for her the compelling charm of her own chosen work. In her absence of personal ambition, and the disinterestedness of her desire to be serviceable to botany, Dora Pertz was true to the family tradition handed on to her by Horner, Lyell and Bunbury; she was one with them in pursuing science simply for the love of it, and in being—in the basic sense of that much mishandled word—an amateur. AGNES ARBER.

#### Dr. Moses Gaster

We regret to record the death of Dr. Moses Gaster, the distinguished Jewish scholar, historian, and folklorist, formerly Chief Rabbi, which took place suddenly on March 5 at the age of eighty-two years.

Moses Gaster was born in Bucharest on September 16, 1856. He was the son of the Chevalier A. E. Gaster, and a member of a family which for long had been settled in Rumania. He graduated at the University of Bucharest and received the degree of Ph.D. from the University of Leipzig and the rabbinical diploma from the Jewish Rabbinical Seminary at Breslau. On his return to Bucharest in 1880, after a period of literary activity, he became lecturer on Rumanian language and literature at the University of Bucharest and inspector-general of schools, holding in addition other public offices; but his activities in connexion with the settlement of Jews in Palestine led to his inclusion among the Jews expelled from Rumania at this time at the instance of Russia. Dr. Gaster then settled in England, where his work as Ilchester lecturer in Greco-Slavonic languages in the University of Oxford rapidly secured him a place in the front ranks of scholarship.

Dr. Gaster was the author of a large number of works on Jewish historical subjects, as well as in the more advanced Hebrew and Rabbinical studies. As a folklorist he inevitably came to be regarded as the first authority in Great Britain on the folk-lore of Rumania; but his interest in folk-lore studies was by no means confined to either his country of origin or to his special field of Jewish scholarship. His wise counsel and ready ability in suggestion were ever at the service of his fellow workers. Among his publications may be mentioned as of special interest to students of folk-lore and comparative religion "Rumanian Bird and Beast Stories", "Studies and

Texts in Folklore, Magic, Medieval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology", "The Samaritans", embodying the Schweich Lectures of 1925, and "The Sword of Moses" an early Jewish magical work which had been lost for a thousand years until discovered and published by him.

On the cancellation of his order of expulsion Dr. Gaster paid several visits to Rumania and for a report on the English educational system, published as a Rumanian State paper, and other services he received the Rumanian Order of Merit of the First Class.

#### Dr. Antoine Béclère

DR. ANTOINE LOUIS GUSTAVE BÉCLÈRE, the pioneer of medical radiology in France, died at the age of eighty-two years on February 24 in Paris, where he was born on March 17, 1856, the son of a general practitioner, and received his medical education.

Béclère qualified in 1882 with a thesis on the contagion of measles and at first took a keen interest in other infectious diseases, especially smallpox—for which in collaboration with Chambon and Ménard he introduced treatment by convalescent serum—vaccinia and syphilis. Shortly after the discovery of X-rays in 1895 he became engrossed in the study of radiodiagnosis and radiotherapy, and at his own expense fitted up a radiological laboratory at the Hôpital Tenon in 1898 and started a course of free instruction in medical radiology which he resumed in 1899 after his transfer to the Hôpital Saint Antoine and continued until his retirement in 1921.

During the Great War, Béclère was director of a radiological centre at the Val de Grâce military hospital. In addition to numerous communications to medical societies and journals, he was the author of works on "Röntgen Rays in the Diagnosis of Tuberculosis" (1899), "Röntgen Rays in the Diagnosis of Non-Tuberculous Diseases of the Chest", several articles in the treatise of medical radiology edited by Prof. Bouchard (1904), and "Röntgen Rays in the Diagnosis of Internal Diseases" (1904).

Besides being Commander of the Legion of Honour, Béclère received many well-merited distinctions. In 1928 he was elected president of the Académie de Médecine, of which he had been made a member in 1908. He was also one of the first members of the recently resuscitated Académie de Chirurgie. In 1931 he was president of the third International Congress of Radiology held in Paris, and the same year he was elected an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. On attaining his eightieth birthday in 1936 his pupils, colleagues and friends dedicated to him a jubilee volume in which his contributions not only to radiology but also to pædiatrics, experimental medicine, neurology, endocrinology, diseases of the chest, diseases of the abdomen and gynæcology formed the subjects of appreciation by well-known specialists. The journal *Strahlentherapie* also devoted a *Festschrift* to him on the same occasion. During the last years of his life, he resumed his study of vaccinia and syphilis.

J. D. ROLLESTON.