

Dr. F. C. Steward

DR. F. C. STEWARD, reader in plant physiology in Birkbeck College, University of London, has recently left for the United States to take up a temporary appointment as research associate in the University of Chicago, where he is to develop certain aspects of plant physiology and biochemistry in which Prof. E. J. Kraus and the Chicago Department of Botany are interested. Dr. Steward has been given leave of absence by Birkbeck College for this purpose, and the appointment is a sequel to the destruction in an air raid of the research laboratory in plant physiology at Birkbeck, which had been largely equipped by the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Steward has been engaged since 1941 with the Ministry of Aircraft Production, where he developed a department dealing with statistics concerning the determination and forecasting of Royal Air Force requirements. It seemed that his return to botanical research would be delayed indefinitely by the destruction of his laboratory, so that the offer of Prof. Kraus has rendered a real service to botanical inquiry.

Mrs. Neville-Rolfe, O.B.E.

MRS. NEVILLE-ROLFE has resigned her office as honorary secretary of the British Social Hygiene Council. Fortunately this does not mean a severance of her interest in the Council. She has been elected a vice-president, and has also accepted a new office of honorary adviser, which will enable her to place at its disposal her great store of accumulated knowledge and experience. As honorary secretary of the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease from its foundation thirty years ago, she took the principal part in organizing the whole scheme of popular education in this subject—one hitherto taboo. In these early days the work of popular enlightenment on venereal disease was financed by a direct grant from the Exchequer; but the difficulty lay in persuading local authorities to avail themselves of the educational material offered by the Council, and in overcoming the resistance of many hospital authorities to the establishment of free clinics. In this work, and also in the organization of lectures to the armed forces during the War of 1914–18, Mrs. Neville-Rolfe was indefatigable.

As the years passed, it became increasingly obvious that the problem of venereal disease was only one aspect of a larger one, that of social hygiene in its wide sense, and that the Council's work should cover this wider field so as to combat the causes leading to sexual misconduct—the absence of biological teaching of the adolescent, the lack of training of teachers and instruction of parents, and the need for amelioration of various relevant social malconditions. At the same time, the name was changed to British Social Hygiene Council, and Mrs. Neville-Rolfe organized the wider field with undiminished zeal. In addition, however, to this work on the home front, she was able to extend its scope to the Dominions and the Colonies, in many of which branches and colleague organizations were established. Through the collaboration of the Government Departments concerned, several overseas visits and commissions were arranged and carried out by the Council between the years 1920 and 1936. Mrs. Neville-Rolfe, in 1926, spent six months in India, touring many provinces and States on the invitation of their respective Governments. She also, at various times, visited Canada, the Far East, Palestine, Cyprus, Jamaica

and Southern Rhodesia, investigating local conditions and organizing measures for reducing the incidence of venereal disease. Liaison was also established internationally with the various foreign societies working in this field, and she was one of the founders of the Union Internationale Contre le Pêril Vénérien, holding office as vice-president, and chairman of its Ports Commission. In 1941, she was awarded the Snow Gold Medal of the American Social Hygiene Council for work in social hygiene (*Nature*, 147, 261; 1941).

Chemical Technology at Imperial College

THE Imperial College of Science and Technology, with the approval of the Court of the University of London, has lately accepted from Messrs. Courtaulds, Ltd., a benefaction intended to promote its work in the field of chemical technology. This benefaction, which is calculated to yield an income of £3,000 per annum in perpetuity, will be administered for the present by a small body of trustees, and will permit the institution in Imperial College of a Courtaulds chair of chemical engineering, to which it is expected that an appointment will be made this year. It will also provide for other needs in the Department of Chemical Technology, in ways that will be decided by the trustees after consultation with the College. The Governing Body of Imperial College has recorded their most grateful appreciation of the gift, which is an outstanding event of this centenary year.

Visits of French and Belgian Medical and Scientific Workers

A FRENCH medical delegation of ten is visiting Great Britain during April 7–17 as guests of the British Council, in conjunction with the Royal College of Physicians, and will be entertained by other organizations, including the Royal Society of Medicine. The delegation will see hospitals in London and elsewhere and visit Oxford and Cambridge. The members are: Académie de Médecine: Prof. Baudouin, dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Paris, Prof. A. Lemierre and Dr. P. F. Armand-Delille; Conseil Supérieur de Médecine: Dr. Ravina, Dr. A. Laporte and Dr. H. Descomps; Provinces: Prof. C. Soula (Toulouse), Prof. Gernez-Rieux (Lille), Prof. Roche (Marseilles) and Dr. Nedelec (Angers). The first of four groups of representatives from Belgian universities, whose visits are being arranged by the Belgian Fondation Universitaire, will be in Britain during April 16–30. The other groups will follow at intervals between May and July. The members of the first group are: Prof. V. Bohet, professor of English, Liège; Prof. N. Goormachtigh, Faculty of Medicine, Ghent; Prof. P. Govaerts, Faculty of Medicine, Brussels; Prof. M. F. L. Hemptinne, Faculty of Science, Louvain; Prof. C. J. Jungers, Faculty of Science, Louvain.

Bibliography of the British Flora

WITH the view of eventual publication, it is proposed to compile a bibliography of the British Flora. One section of this, on local botany, would comprise all publications, which it is possible to trace, dealing wholly or partly with the flora of any area within the British Isles. This section would include local floras and works on topographical botany, and all publications, such as local and county histories, guide books, periodicals and newspapers, etc., in which plant lists of particular areas have appeared; manu-

scripts of sufficient importance and authenticity would also be listed. Where, however, only incidental mention is made of plant localities, as in many of the standard floras of Britain and in monographs, these would be omitted from this section. The compilation will entail a large amount of research and will be possible only with the co-operation of helpers who have the requisite local knowledge of the literature of their areas. The editors are Mr. J. S. L. Gilmour, Mr. H. A. Hyde, Mr. H. S. Marshall, Mr. N. Douglas Simpson and Dr. G. Taylor. Those willing to help in this compilation should communicate with Mr. N. Douglas Simpson, Maesbury, 3 Cavendish Road, Bournemouth, Hants, indicating when they can begin work, in what areas they are interested and to what libraries and periodicals they have access.

Early Scottish Prehistory

It is doubtful whether it can be proved that any cultures earlier than the Mesolithic existed in Scotland. This is perhaps surprising, as there would seem to have been no climatic reason why Scotland should not have been habitable during the main interglacial epoch in the middle of the Great Ice Age in any event. Maybe the scanty populations of the Old Stone Age never reached the extreme north-western edge of the Old World. Mesolithic industries contemporary with those farther south have been unearthed at a number of sites. But many of the apparently Mesolithic industries in Scotland are actually much more recent in date and contemporary with the Neolithic or even early Metal Age farther south. Even in the Cleveland hills of Yorkshire, sites are known where pigmy tools of Mesolithic facies occur in real association with leaf-shaped arrowheads. Such an overlap of cultures is not surprising. The Neolithic civilization in Britain was rather due to the incoming of new modes of life than to hordes of invaders; in large part it was a case of 'neolithizing' the autochthonous inhabitants. Off the beaten track, the older culture continued to survive, influenced to a greater or less degree by the more advanced ideas spreading slowly over the land.

Much of our information of these early cultures in Scotland is due to the work of A. D. Lacaille, who is collecting a corpus of material for eventual publication after the War. Recently, he gave a paper to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland on the stone industries associated with the raised beach at Ballantrae. The sites are in Wigtownshire and south Ayrshire, and the specimens were collected on the tilled surface of the raised beach, which itself dates to the period of the Littorina Marine transgression. With the specimens of Mesolithic facies were found others, Neolithic in appearance. The evidence would seem to point to the introduction there of the Neolithic civilization towards the end of the Atlantic post-glacial phase. Among the Mesolithic types of implements occur specimens which recall some found in northern Irish sites. Thus tanged points resembling those from the valley of the River Bann have been found. Mr. Lacaille's definitive publication will be awaited with interest. There is still a lot to be learnt about the cultural overlaps in Scotland and the various influences that went to form the earliest Stone Age cultures north of the Cheviots.

Archaeological Expedition to Mexico

THE War has forced the National Geographic Society to curtail its scientific field expeditions, but the archaeological studies that have been made

annually since 1937-38 in southern Mexico under the sponsorship of the Society and the Smithsonian Institution will continue. The seventh expedition, headed by Dr. Matthew W. Stirling, is on its way to the southernmost Mexican State of Chiapas where, digging into huge burial mounds and clearing dense jungle growth, he will continue to reveal some of the secrets of pre-Columbian civilization in this hemisphere. Dr. Stirling is accompanied by his wife, Marion Stirling, who is also an archaeologist, and Richard H. Stewart, staff photographer of the National Geographic Society. The expedition this year plans to conduct its studies in the mountains east of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Social Implications of Engineering

ON March 28, Sir Harry Railing, president of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, delivered an address to the London Students' Section of the Institution, taking as his subject the social implications of engineering. Sir Harry stressed that it is essential for the engineer to grasp the inner meaning of his work and the mission he has to fulfil in his everyday life. To do this, a full appreciation of past achievements is necessary, and he must feel that, however small or large his contribution, he is a vital unit in a powerful living force. Material progress has been so remarkable that too little attention has been paid to the development of the lives of human beings. Humanity should have been trained and encouraged to accommodate itself to the increased impetus of science and engineering, so as to avoid a disastrous piling up of pent-up energy. Engineers should have foreseen these consequences more clearly and made the world realize that increasing material knowledge necessitates the acceptance of new responsibilities both on the part of the individual, the community and the State.

Sir Harry Railing does not believe in early specialization. When specialization becomes necessary, engineers should retain a broad understanding of the work of others in as wide a field as possible. Of the relative value of the methods most useful in engineering work, mathematics and physics are of paramount importance. But engineering involves also the handling of human beings, and it vitally affects their lives. A broader understanding of sociological problems is necessary, and if the engineer's work neglects the spiritual aspect it is liable to be a dismal failure. For the well-being of the community the scientific approach should be applied to social problems and politics, but its limitation should be borne in mind. Man is finite, not infinite, and from this should spring humility and tolerance of others.

Jubilee of the *Astrophysical Journal*

WITH the current issue of the *Astrophysical Journal*, this periodical completes its hundredth volume. Founded in 1895 by Hale as an international review of spectroscopy and astronomical physics, the *Astrophysical Journal* soon became the acknowledged medium for the publication of research, and especially of observational research, by English-speaking astrophysicists. Although the original plan of appointing collaborating editors from countries other than the United States has been recently abandoned, the international character of the journal is still attested by its contents pages. During the past fifty years such famous names as those of Cornu, Huggins, Belopolsky, Kayser, Schuster, Newall and Alfred Fowler have appeared beside those of their American colleagues,