

those factors to be insufficient in the study of plant distribution and adaptation; so he sought methods of assessing their integrated effects. He introduced the dynamic concepts of the water-supplying power of the soil and the evaporating power of the air. His porous porcelain atmometers (evaporimeters) with standardized spherical bulbs have been very widely used. He sought to measure the water-supplying power of the soil by inserting osmometers in it. Although he may have over-estimated the mobility of capillary water, his experimental approach was sound and stimulating. Connected with these investigations was his introduction of the auto-irrigator, a porous pot supplying water to the soil at a predetermined capillary potential.

As physiologist he sought to express the water relations of plants in terms of quantitative physical laws, as affected by variations of water content and internal resistances as well as by external factors. As ecologist he aimed at correlating the distribution of vegetation with the quantitative data and at giving precision to otherwise vaguely defined distinctions. This is the keynote of "The Distribution of Vegetation in the United States as related to Climatic Conditions", which he published with Forrest Shreve in 1921.

The long series of papers which emanated from Baltimore during the thirty years of his tenure are ample proof of the stimulus of his leadership.

D. THODAY

NEWS and VIEWS

Egyptology in the University of Liverpool:

Prof. A. M. Blackman

WITH the retirement, on reaching the age-limit, of Dr. Aylward M. Blackman from the Brunner chair of Egyptology, which he has held since 1934, the University of Liverpool loses a fruitful teacher and a valued contributor to a number of branches of ancient Egyptian studies. Born at Norwich in 1883, and a keen student of Egyptology from the age of sixteen, Dr. Blackman was educated first privately, then at St. Paul's School, London, and Queen's College, Oxford, where in 1906 he took a first class in Oriental Studies. During 1906-14 and 1920-21 he took part in or directed excavations and recording in Egypt (Oxyrhynchus, Abydos, Meir, El-Amarnah) and the Sudan (Survey of Nubia, Buhen, Faras, Sesebi). During 1912-18 he was Laycock Student of Egyptology of Worcester College, Oxford. Since 1935 he has been joint editor, with Prof. J. P. Droop, of the *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, and during 1922-35 was a member of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society. From 1936 on he has been special lecturer in Egyptology in the University of Manchester. His publications have been numerous; chief among them are four volumes on "The Rock Tombs of Meir" (1914-24), with about eighty plates drawn by himself, and volumes on the Lower Nubian temples of Dendûr, Derr and Bîgeh. Other works deal especially with Egyptian myth and ritual. He has done much to present Ancient Egypt to a wide public. All Egyptologists will hope that it will be possible for Dr. Blackman to continue his Egyptological researches for many years to come.

Mr. H. W. Fairman

DR. BLACKMAN'S successor is Mr. Herbert Walter Fairman, who has been an active worker in the field since 1929 (war-service excepted). Mr. Fairman was born at Clare, Suffolk, in 1907; but he spent his early years in Egypt, where his father was a missionary. He was educated at Goudhurst School, Kent, going eventually to the University of Liverpool, where he studied Egyptology under the late Prof. Peet. For the next ten years he took part in excavations conducted in Egypt and the Sudan by the Egypt Exploration Society—at the cemetery of the Buchis bulls at Armant, 1929-31; at El-Amarnah, 1930-36; at Sesebi, 1936-38; at Amarah West, 1938-39 and 1947-48. In 1937 he became the Society's field director. At Armant and El-Amarnah he was

primarily responsible for the publication of the inscriptions. The need to interpret the difficult late writing of the Ptolemaic and Roman inscriptions relating to the Buchis bulls led him to specialize in the texts of those periods, and he has become one of the very few contemporary authorities on them. During 1940-47 he was engaged in war-time duties at the British Embassy, Cairo, and while there he gave many lectures on Ancient Egypt to troops in his spare time. It is hoped that his teaching duties at Liverpool will leave him opportunities to continue his researches into the texts of the latest periods, which contain many remarkable matters not generally known even to Egyptologists.

Chemistry at the University College of North Wales, Bangor: Dr. Stanley Peat, F.R.S.

DR. STANLEY PEAT, reader in organic chemistry in the University of Birmingham, has been elected to the chair of chemistry at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, University of Wales, in succession to Prof. E. D. Hughes, who is going to University College, London (*Nature*, April 3, p. 511). Dr. Peat had a distinguished career as a student of King's College, Newcastle, University of Durham, which he entered with a State Scholarship and the Earl Grey Scholarship in 1921. He graduated with first-class honours in the University of Durham in 1924 and was awarded the Saville Shaw and the Freire-Marreco Medals on graduation. He there joined the research school of Sir Norman Haworth, and eventually followed him to the University of Birmingham. His first joint publication in 1926 was on a revision of the structural formula of glucose. After obtaining his doctorate he was appointed lecturer in the Department of Physiology in the Medical School of Birmingham under Prof. I. de Burgh Daly, and published several papers in physiological journals on histamine. In 1934 he transferred to the teaching staff of the Department of Chemistry at Birmingham and engaged in constitutional studies of the polysaccharides. Outstanding among his publications are: his proof by synthesis of the configuration of glucosamine, the constitution of maltose, the studies of the mechanism of inversion of configuration in the sugar group, and especially the study of the enzyme systems responsible for the synthesis and degradation of starch. This latter work has led to the isolation of the Q-enzyme which is responsible for the biosynthesis in the presence of