

beyond the larger fungi to many groups of micro-fungi and especially to those of medical importance. With the sudden development of interest in antibiotics aroused during the Second World War by penicillin, his advice was of great importance, and he has rightly insisted that mycologists and not chemists are the proper people to be entrusted with the growth of moulds. His influence in mycological education has been great. By means of lectures and displays arranged in autumn at the Museum, he has aroused widespread interest in fungi and has been responsible for introducing many a student to mycology. He has made varied and valuable contributions to mycological literature. Nearly every naturalist who forays among the fungi has a well-worn copy of his "Handbook of the Larger Fungi"; his little book "Fungi" (published for sixpence by Benn in 1929) is one of the best introductions to mycology in existence; his presidential address to the Linnaean Society, "The Expanding Knowledge of Mycology since Linnæus", is a major contribution to the history of botany; and his two little King Penguin books, "Edible Fungi" and "Poisonous Fungi", have extended interest in these organisms throughout the length and breadth of Britain. On leaving the Museum, Dr. Ramsbottom by no means retires from mycology. Indeed, he remains one of the most active figures in British botany. His many friends the world over will wish him a long and happy retirement.

Dr. George Taylor

DR. GEORGE TAYLOR has been appointed to succeed Dr. Ramsbottom. Dr. Taylor was born at Edinburgh on February 15, 1904, and was educated at George Heriot School, proceeding thence to the University of Edinburgh, where he had a successful academic career. Immediately after taking his degree he accompanied the late Reginald Cory and others on a horticultural collecting trip to South Africa. He entered the Department of Botany of the British Museum (Natural History) in 1928. His work was principally concerned with Gamopetalæ; but he continued with his monograph on the genus *Meconopsis*, which was published in book form in 1934. In 1934-35 he went as botanist to the British Museum Expedition to East Africa, and made extensive collections on Ruwenzori and other mountains of western Kenya. Another opportunity to study alpine flora came in 1938 when he was invited to accompany the well-known botanical collectors F. Ludlow and G. Sherriff on their expedition to Tibet. Most of the plants collected previously had been those likely to prove of horticultural interest, and, consequently, the fully representative sample of the flora which was obtained is extremely valuable. Unfortunately, before much could be done with it, war broke out and almost immediately Dr. Taylor was seconded to the Air Ministry with the rank of principal. He returned to the Museum in 1946 and was soon afterwards appointed deputy keeper. He is an active student of the British flora, particularly of the rarer plants of the mountains of Scotland. At another level he has worked at aquatic plants, chiefly Podostemacæ, but also, in collaboration with J. E. Dandy, is monographing the British species of *Potamogeton*. Dr. Taylor is a keen gardener and has been active in the study of the horticultural possibilities of Himalayan plants. For many years he has been recorder of Section K (Botany) of the British Association.

Augusto Righi, For.Mem.R.S. (1850-1920)

A HUNDRED years ago, on August 27 at Bologna, Augusto Righi, the Italian physicist, renowned for his researches in electricity, magnetism and light, was born. Most of Righi's life was spent in Bologna and he was professor of physics in the University from 1889 until his death on June 8, 1920. His earliest work was on the change of the electrical resistance of bismuth in a magnetic field, and he applied this phenomenon to the measurement of magnetic fields. He also studied the Kerr effect and found the variation in the plane of polarization with the wave-length of light. About 1880 Righi began a long series of researches on electric discharge *in vacuo* and in air, and this, in various forms, remained his main interest for the rest of his life. He observed the photo-electric discharge from a zinc plate on exposure to ultra-violet radiation and investigated the trajectories of cathode rays in a magnetic field; though the discovery of the electron eluded him, he was aware of the existence of negative carriers of electricity. Righi's name has been associated with a special form of Hertzian oscillator which is similar to the apparatus for the transmission of radio waves first used by Marconi, who knew of Righi's work but was never, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, one of his pupils (see Marconi's tribute in *Nature*, 105, 526; 1920). Righi also wrote papers on the change of length due to magnetization, change of size in insulators under electric stress, and radioactivity. Of the many honours that were conferred upon him may be mentioned the 10,000-lire prize of the Academia dei Lincei and the Hughes Medal of the Royal Society. He was elected a foreign member of the Royal Society and of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Uppsala, and in 1905 was made a Senator of the Italian Parliament.

On the occasion of the centenary of the birth at Bologna of Augusto Righi, the Italian Physical Society is holding a congress there during September 15-20. A number of foreign physicists have been invited to participate. No specific programme has been prepared, and the various sessions of the congress will be arranged along the lines of the papers presented.

Royal Society of Canada: Annual Meeting

THE annual meeting of the Royal Society of Canada was held at the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, during June 5-7. Among the new officers elected for the year 1950-51 were: *President*, Dr. J. J. O'Neill; *Honorary Secretary*, Dr. Seraphin Marion; *Honorary Executive Secretary*, Dr. W. H. Cook; *President, Section 3*, Dr. H. G. Thode; *President, Section 4*, Dr. P. S. Warren; *President, Section 5*, Dr. L. C. Simard. The Flavelle Medal was awarded to Dr. C. H. Best, the Lorne Pierce Medal to Dr. M. Barbeau, and the Tyrrell Medal to Dr. J. B. Brobner (Columbia University, New York). Twenty-two new Fellows were elected to the Society. During the course of the meeting various symposia were held, one under the auspices of the Society entitled "The Arctic", one under Section 3 on "The Atmosphere of the Stars and Planets", and a third, under Section 5, on "Biological Macromolecules". Dr. J. A. Pearce, the retiring president, addressed the Society on modern concepts of the universe. Dr. T. L. Tanton, retiring president of Section 4, discussed "The Origin of Iron Range Rocks", and Dr. T. W. M. Cameron, retiring president of Section 5,