

quently end in a truce, both sides agreeing that there was much in Nature that we could never understand. But Burbury was rarely the first to give in. It is these passages of arms which very often enable men to appreciate each other's good qualities, and to realise the useful part which men like Burbury may play in evolving order out of chaos.

G. H. BRYAN.

PROF. A. LADENBURG.

THE death occurred at Breslau, on August 15, of Dr. Albert Ladenburg, professor of chemistry in the University of Breslau. Dr. Ladenburg was born at Mannheim in 1842, and graduated as doctor of philosophy in 1863. In 1873 he accepted an invitation to take up a position as professor of chemistry and director of the laboratory at Kiel. In 1886 the honorary degree of doctor of medicine of Berne University was conferred on Dr. Ladenburg in recognition of his scientific investigations, and British and other societies, including the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, also honoured him with honorary membership. He was also awarded the Hanbury gold medal for his services in the promotion of research on the chemistry of drugs. It was in 1889 that Dr. Ladenburg took up the post of professor of chemistry at Breslau, and he occupied the office with very great success.

Ladenburg's name is best known by his synthetic work on the production of homatropine. On splitting up atropine, tropic acid and tropine can be formed as derivatives; the latter Ladenburg combined with amygdalic acid to form a compound which is converted into oxy-toluyl-tropeine, or homatropine, an artificial alkaloid which, with its salts, has proved of the greatest service in ophthalmic surgery. His mathematical method of treating synthetic formulæ, and his prismatic benzene ring, place him in the first rank of chemists as a theorist; while as to his practical work, his list of communications to scientific societies and literature in this country and elsewhere includes articles on "The Valency of Nitrogen," on "Synthetic Alkaloids," on "The Relationship between Hyoscyamine and Atropine and the Conversion of the one Alkaloid into the other," on "Hyoscine," on "The Mydriatic Alkaloids occurring in Nature," on "The Synthesis of Coniine," and on "The History and Constitution of Atropine," in addition to the compilation with other collaborators of a dictionary ("Handwörterbuch der Chemie"), consisting of thirteen volumes dealing with inorganic and organic chemistry.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION AT PORTSMOUTH.

BY the time this issue reaches the readers of NATURE the eighty-first meeting of the British Association will have been inaugurated at Portsmouth, and, given fair weather conditions, we trust it will be a useful and enjoyable gathering. Judging from the number of distinguished men of science who have expressed their intention of being present, the meeting should be of importance as regards its scientific work, as well as successful from a social point of view.

The reception-room is the large Connaught Drill Hall, which appears to be ideal for that purpose. It gives under one roof a large reception hall with post office, telephone, &c., and a comfortably furnished reading and writing room for the members. In addition to this there is also a small room set apart for the use of ladies.

In point of view of numbers, the Portsmouth meeting may not reach that of Sheffield last year, but this

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is accounted for partly by the absence of any special industry attached to the town, and also may, to some extent, be due to the absence of any university or university college. Most of the accommodation available is, however, booked, and those who arrive late may have difficulty in finding quarters.

The meeting rooms are a little scattered, but this was unavoidable, and notices will be displayed making the routes to be taken to the various section-rooms easy to find.

In passing, mention may be made of a convenient plan for communication between members of the association. It is a box which will be placed in the reception-room, into which notes may be dropped addressed to other members. This box will be frequently cleared, and the notes delivered on request to those to whom they are written.

The pleasures of the meeting commence to-day (Thursday), when at 2.30 a party will be taken over the dockyard and battleships. A garden-party is to be given this afternoon by Sir John and Lady Brickwood at their beautiful residence in the town. In the evening the Mayor will give a reception at the South Parade Pier, which is the property of the Corporation.

On Friday afternoon there will be a special visit to the new filtration works of the Borough of Portsmouth Water Company, and Saturday will be entirely devoted to all-day excursions, including two to the Isle of Wight, and three drives in the South Downs, starting from Chichester, to which city there will be a special train. The drives are to (1) Kingly Vale, West Dean, and Goodwood; (2) Boxgrove Priory and Arundel Castle; (3) Bignor (with the Roman remains) and Parham Park.

On Sunday the Bishop of Winchester is to preach at the Portsea parish church, and on Tuesday the Mayor will entertain the members at a garden-party. In addition, the naval authorities have organised a naval display in Stokes' Bay, consisting of an attack by torpedo-boat destroyers and submarines. Visitors should not neglect a visit to the old *Victory*, one of the most interesting "links with the past" in existence, and a full description of which, written by Mr. W. L. Wyllie, R.A., will be found in an interesting little handbook to Portsmouth which will be presented to members.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY PROF. SIR. WILLIAM RAMSAY, K.C.B., PH.D., LL.D., D.Sc., M.D., F.R.S., PRESIDENT.

It is now eighty years since this Association first met at York, under the presidency of Earl Fitzwilliam. The object of the Association was then explicitly stated:—"To give a stronger impulse and a more systematic direction to scientific inquiry, to promote the intercourse of those who cultivate science in different parts of the British Empire with one another and with foreign philosophers, to obtain a more general attention to the objects of science and a removal of any disadvantages of a public kind which impede its progress."

In 1831 the workers in the domain of science were relatively few. The Royal Society, which was founded by Dr. Willis, Dr. Wilkins, and others, under the name of the "Invisible, or Philosophical College," about the year 1645, and which was incorporated in December, 1660, with the approval of King Charles II., was almost the only meeting-place for those interested in the progress of science; and its *Philosophical Transactions*, begun in March, 1664-5, almost the only medium of publication. Its character was described in the following words of a contemporary poem:—

"This noble learned Corporation
Not for themselves are thus combined
To prove all things by demonstration,
But for the public good of the nation,
And general benefit of mankind."