

of knowledge. His unrivalled knowledge of Greek plant-names he gave freely to the new edition of Liddell and Scott, regretting all the while that much useful and appropriate matter, the great mass of his accumulated notes, could find no place therein. He knew, as many another scholar knows, that what we wanted was no mere Lexicon but a "Thesaurus," and that England should have been rich and generous enough to let her scholars make one. But Liddell and Scott held the field and "queered the pitch," he said; and though he loved the great book, all the more because it hailed from his own College, he spoke of it as "So-and-so's dry-as-dust pemmican,—if you can conceive the similitude."

Apart from his contributions to the Lexicon and his two chapters in the Companions to Latin and Greek Studies, Thiselton-Dyer's chief writings on classical botany are found in the *Journal of Philology*, now dead, which flourished under the editorship of Ingram Bywater and Henry Jackson. Dyer wrote at least three papers for that journal, these three including articles on about thirty "Ancient Plant-names," all more or less obscure and difficult. One of the smaller articles (by way of example) was on the *ἐλαίγνος*, a plant mentioned by Theophrastus, which the old Liddell and Scott called "a Bœotian marsh-plant, perhaps *myrica* or *sweet-gale*." Dyer had no difficulty in showing that it was not *myrica*, which means tamarisk, nor was it *sweet-gale*, which is a northern plant unknown in Greece. He showed in the end that the word were better written *ἐλέαγνος*, which is plain Greek for a marsh-lambkin; and that Theophrastus's plant was nothing but the common goat-willow, *Salix caprea*, whose catkins country-folk still call "lamb's tails." For a more elaborate essay take the one on *Amomum*, a very difficult word, which Thiselton-Dyer traced up and down through an immense field of old literature. He begins by showing, from Theophrastus, how both *Amomum* and *Cardamom* came from India; and how when Pliny and Dioscorides call them natives of Media, Pontus, and Armenia, these are but the trade-routes by which they came. Pliny's *Cardamomum* is easily disposed of; it is the common Malabar *Cardamom* of the apothecaries. *Amomum* is much more difficult; but Dyer shows how Pliny's description of it as a shrub (*frutex*), growing on the mountains (*montuosus*); with its spiny inflorescence on a short stalk (*palmi altitudine*); with its scaly leaves or bracts "like those of a Pomegranate," which soon turn dry and brittle (*posterius fragile*), and need to be gently handled and kept together (*manipulatum leniter componi*),—how all this tallies word for word with the Nepal *Cardamom* (*A. subulatum*) of the Himalayan slopes, still used in India as a cheap substitute for the real thing. He then discovers the very same identification in the rare "Commentatio de Amomo" of Nicolo Maragna, a Veronese physician, whom Caspar Bauhin quotes in his "Pinax." Lastly, he proceeds to discuss, carefully and patiently, the uncertain source and difficult etymology of the word.

No busy and laborious man ever finishes his life's work, no good man reaps all the harvest he has

sown. But it is earnestly to be hoped that what Thiselton-Dyer has left behind, ungarnered and unpublished, may see the light of day. Just eight years ago he wrote me: "I have projected a Glossary [of classical Plant-names], and the Clarendon Press profess to be willing to print it. I have the whole thing in slips, and I go on annotating. . . . But whether with impaired health I shall be able to accomplish a fair copy for the printer is a problem." A sympathetic and friendly biographer said the other day that Thiselton-Dyer would be "remembered as a great botanical administrator." Even such qualities as he possessed and such services as he rendered in this capacity will, I think, prove less memorable than the scholar's task which was the pastime of his busy life and the occupation of his later years.

D. W. T.

DR. S. J. MAUCHLY.

SEBASTIAN JACOB MAUCHLY, physicist with the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington since 1914, died on Dec. 24, at his home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, after a long illness. Dr. Mauchly, who was fifty years of age, specialised in terrestrial electricity, and as chief of the Section of Terrestrial Electricity of the Department was responsible for the development and improvement of many instruments for observing the electric elements at field and observatory stations. He made numerous valuable contributions to this branch of science and was the first to direct attention to the apparent universal twenty-four hour term in the diurnal variation of the earth's electric field. This fundamental result was deduced by him largely from his discussions of the work at sea by the *Carnegie*, and he later corroborated this conclusion by extensive investigations of results at land stations over the entire globe. He was also chief of the solar eclipse expedition of the Carnegie Institution of Washington to Lakin, Kansas, in 1918, and co-author of Vol. 5 of *Researches of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism*, 1926.

Dr. Mauchly received his educational training at the University of Cincinnati, where in the Department of Physics he took the degree of A.B. in 1911, and as Hanna research fellow, that of Ph.D. in 1913. He was a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a member of the American Geophysical Union, International Geophysical Union, Washington Academy of Sciences (serving on the board of editors of the *Journal*, 1925-26), and of the Washington Philosophical Society (recording secretary 1919-21).

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Mr. Bernard Coventry, C.I.E., first director and principal of the Agricultural Research Institute and College, Pusa, Behar, on Jan. 26, aged sixty-nine years.

Prof. Johannes von Kries, of Freiburg im Breisgau, the distinguished physiologist and editor of the third German edition of Helmholtz's "Physiological Optics," on Dec. 30, aged seventy-five years.