

In a renewed investigation of the African species, R. E. D. Baker and N. W. Simmonds (*Kew Bull.*, No. 3, 405; 1953) reaffirm the validity of the genus *Ensete* and give a fully annotated conspectus of the species and also some interesting and important botanical, geographical and archaeological information. *Ensete edule*, for example, was extensively cultivated for food in marshy lands in southern Egypt during a warm, wet climatic phase in Neolithic times and is portrayed on the pottery of the period. Because of its excellent fibre it may also have yielded the materials from which the royal linen was woven in later periods.

The inflorescence of the banana and some related genera is a very unusual and complex one and has been variously interpreted and described by different botanists. In a recent paper, in which the inception and development of the flower buds have been closely studied, A. Fahn (*Kew Bull.*, No. 3, 299; 1953) concludes that the inflorescence of *Musa* has probably passed through many more evolutionary changes than that in any of the related genera. In *Ravenala*, *Strelitzia* and *Heliconia* the flower clusters are arranged in cincinni. In relation to the facts now available, the view emerges that the flower groups in *Musa* have developed from cincinni and that the whole inflorescence—which becomes the banana bunch—consists of an axis, with spirally arranged bracts, in the axil of each of which a cincinnus is borne.

#### Chelsea Polytechnic

THE contribution made by leading technical institutions to the country's need for technologists and technicians is well shown by the statistics set out in the fifty-eighth annual report of Chelsea Polytechnic. In 1952-53 there were 775 full-time day students, 330 part-time day students and 1,729 evening students. Of these, no fewer than 848 were registered students of the University of London. Six students were successful in obtaining doctorate degrees, nineteen obtained their M.Sc.'s, while sixty-two obtained B.Sc. (special) degrees. The geographical distribution of the students at the Chelsea Polytechnic shows the remarkably wide area from which they are drawn. In addition to most English counties, full-time students come from Scotland (4), Wales (19), British overseas Dominions and Colonies (74), and various foreign countries (98).

#### French Fisheries Congress in Algiers

THE fifteenth French National Congress of Fisheries and Maritime Industries will be held in Algiers during June 21-27 under the auspices of the Society for the Professional and Technical Instruction in Maritime Fisheries in conjunction with the French Society for Economic Geography. Among the subjects to be discussed at the Congress will be scientific studies; legislation and economic studies; equipment; distribution of fish; by-products; preservation of fish (salting, smoking and drying); refrigeration; and culture of shell-fish. The bias of these studies will be towards problems specifically relating to French North Africa, but one session will deal with fish from other countries. Further information can be obtained from M. André Calandrea, 34 rue de Bassano, Paris 8<sup>e</sup>.

#### Colonial Service: Recent Appointments

THE following appointments have recently been made in the Colonial Service: J. A. Austin (agri-

cultural officer, Gambia), director of agriculture, Gambia; I. Sibson (senior agricultural officer, Gold Coast), assistant director of agriculture, Gold Coast; D. M. Montgomerie (assistant meteorologist, Nigeria), meteorologist, Nigeria; J. Dore, botanist (plant physiologist), Federation of Malaya; B. E. Mounter, plant breeder, Northern Rhodesia; I. A. Black, assistant conservator of forests, Nigeria; B. Brand, grassland ecologist, Department of Soil and Land Use Survey, Gold Coast; R. H. Eldridge, meteorologist, Gold Coast; Z. Horn, agricultural officer, Aden; A. R. Stobbs, soil survey officer, Gold Coast; P. J. P. Whitehead, biologist, Fisheries Research, Game Department, Kenya.

#### Beit Memorial Fellowships for Medical Research

THE Trustees of the Beit Memorial Fellowships for Medical Research in their report for 1953-54 announce the resignation from the Board of Prof. T. R. Elliott; he has been succeeded by Sir Alan Drury. Junior Fellowships (£630 a year) have been awarded as follows: R. G. Tucker, to investigate the action of divalent metals on the multiplication of bacteriophage, at the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, University of Oxford; D. S. H. W. Nicol, to study the chemistry and pharmacology of peptide fractions of insulin, at the Dunn Institute of Biochemistry, University of Cambridge; and B. T. Donovan, to study the hypothalamic control of the secretions of anterior pituitary hormones, at the University of London Institute of Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital, London.

#### Announcements

THE first award of the J. H. Andrew research fellowship in metallurgy in the University of Sheffield has been made to Mr. R. G. Ward, who is at present working as a research student in the Department of Metallurgy, University of Cambridge. The fellowship has been established by endowments from the English Steel Corporation, Ltd., Thomas Firth and John Brown Ltd., and Firth Vickers, Ltd.

THE title of professor of chemical pathology in the University of London has been conferred on Dr. F. T. G. Prunty in respect of his post at St. Thomas's Hospital Medical School, London; and that of reader in chemical biophysics in the University of London on Dr. R. A. Kekwick, in respect of his post at the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine.

A SUMMER school in programme design for automatic digital computing machines, on the same lines as those of previous years, will be held in the University Mathematical Laboratory, Cambridge, during September 13-24. The course will give a basic training in the mathematical use of machines, dealing with the processes employed and their embodiment in programmes which specify the operation in detail, and lectures and practical classes will be held in the design of programmes for the Cambridge machine known as EDSAC. Application forms (to be returned by June 30) and further information can be obtained from G. F. Hickson, Secretary of the Board of Extra-Mural Studies, Stuart House, Cambridge.

ERRATUM. In the Index of *Nature*, Vol. 172, p. xlv, for "Needham, Dr. James", read "Needham, Dr. Joseph".