

## OBITUARIES

MARGARET KNOX (— - 1952) died at an advanced age on April 29th, 1952. She was of Scottish extraction, her father hailing from Peterhead. Miss Knox was born in London: she studied painting at the Slade School of Art and for several years spent the summer vacation with Walter Russell's sketching party in Cornwall. A number of her paintings of wild flowers dating from 1899 exist and form the nucleus of the collection which she made during her long and active life. After the death of her father she made an extensive tour in the Dominions during which she crossed Canada, travelled widely in New Zealand and spent a few weeks in Australia. In subsequent years she visited the Continent from time to time. She does not, however, appear to have painted when abroad. During the interval between her earlier sketches in Cornwall and the departure on her world tour she made a few additions to her paintings of wild flowers as opportunity offered, but after returning to England she took up painting in earnest and formed the ambition to make as complete a collection of paintings of British plants as she could. Her note-books show that she planned during winter a programme to cover the flowering period for the following year, which would enable her to visit some of the least accessible stations in the United Kingdom at the time of flowering of the rarer plants. If, as occasionally happened, the plant in question could not be found, some other plant would be chosen to occupy the available time. In order to secure fidelity of form and colour, every plant had to be seen in its native haunt. The writer and his wife made their first ascent of Ben Lawers in the summer of 1932. Approaching the summit, they spied Miss Knox toiling slowly ahead in what proved to be an abortive attempt to see *Saxifraga cernua* in flower. It seemed as natural to find her on this mountain as in her home in Highgate. For almost twenty years she climbed Ben Lawers chiefly to see this saxifrage in flower and eventually her quest was rewarded. On this memorable climb in 1932 she spent a long afternoon on the summit being shown many of the rarities for which Ben Lawers is noted. The following morning we were travelling between Killin and Aberfeldy: we called at the Lawers Hotel to enquire after her health after her exertions of the previous day. She had partaken of an early breakfast and was "away on the mountain"!

Miss Knox became a member of the School Nature Study Union many years ago and we shared her company in many rambles during our long period of membership. Soon after the opening of the South London Botanical Institute, she became a member, took part in its varying activities, became a member of the Council in 1936 and served until her death. In 1931 she joined the British Bryological Society and usually

took part in the spring and autumn meetings. She was at Dorchester during the spring meeting when she became ill, passing peacefully away a few days after being removed home. She shared with some other field botanists a strong antipathy to the activities of the old Botanical Exchange Club, and it was only when convinced that our Society held very different objects from the B.E.C. as she had known it that she became a member. She carried her age lightly and attended many of our excursions and meetings, at some of which she exhibited a number of her paintings. On the advice of the late A. J. Wilmott she gave her large collection of water-colour paintings of British wild flowers to the nation and they have been transferred to the Department of Botany at the British Museum (Natural History). A few local paintings have been bequeathed to the citizens of Peterhead.

Margaret Knox possessed those virtues particularly associated with the Scottish character in a high degree. She retained an active memory and seemed to extract humour from every incident in her long and busy life. She had an inexhaustible supply of good stories and many botanists will recall how, after the day's work was over, she would entertain a botanical party at some hotel with her reminiscences, so that the veriest stranger amongst us became drawn into that friendly circle which is so outstanding a feature when field botanists come together.

I am indebted to Mrs. V. M. Hale of Bromley and to Mrs. Adriana White of Ampfield for information concerning Miss Knox's early life. I am glad to have the opportunity of paying a tribute to the gracious lady whose friendship I so valued in life, and of whom I shall retain happy memories so long as I retain memory itself.

J. E. WOODHEAD.

ROBERT LLOYD PRAEGER (1865-1953).—The death of Robert Lloyd Praeger on May 5th, 1953, at the age of 87, marks the end of an epoch in the biological exploration of Ireland. He was the last survivor of a remarkable group of men who belonged to the pre-specialist age of scientific natural history, and whose achievement, thanks to the combination of very wide interests and enthusiasm with great physical energy and stamina, has something of an epic quality. Praeger in his most active period of field work would average 20 to 25 miles of cross-country walking day after day, accumulating each day several hundred records; would spend the evening writing up notes and preparing perhaps 50 herbarium specimens, and could find time meanwhile to ferret out anything of geological, zoological or archaeological interest which lay near his route. He was sustained, not by the daemonic energy of the sort that enabled H. C. Hart to traverse all the mountain ranges of Ireland, botanising at six miles an hour, but by a dogged and tireless persistence which enabled him to "keep on going when the rest had stopped". Utterly indifferent to weather or terrain, he maintained that the best boots were those with plenty of holes in them to let the water out, regarded swimming a stream in his clothes as a perfectly normal

part of field-work, and held that the naturalist who felt under an obligation to keep reasonably dry and clean missed much that was revealed to those who would "poke their enquiring noses, like terriers, into every hole, be it dry or wet". In his later years he did not disdain motor transport when occasion offered (he found the third Irish station for *Alchemilla alpina* by stopping the car at the foot of an undistinguished Kerry mountain and sitting there while his companion, at his suggestion, went up to see what grew on its top); and although a puritan streak did not allow him to feel comfortable in a first-class hotel, he did not practise toughness for its own sake—he simply saw that the programme was carried through in the most rapid and practical way. It is in this spirit that we may picture him as Secretary of the Belfast Field Club struggling up the Mourne Mountains in a blinding storm when all others had turned back; swimming through subterranean lakes at Mitchelstown with a candle in his hat; camping on Inishturk in an abandoned shed in a medley of wire, dynamite, fish-scales, petrol, cement and sawdust ("an ideal existence", he comments); exploring the dense vegetation of Connemara lake-islands clad in a vasculum and walking-stick; digging bronze-age cairns on Carrowkeel and sifting eskers for marine shell-fragments; joining in deep-sea trawling off Cork and attempting to land on Rockall.

But Praeger was much more than a vigorous, enterprising and versatile naturalist. Directing all this activity was a brain which, though limited perhaps in imaginative range, was acute and shrewd, which could very rapidly ascertain and marshal all the relevant facts, and could expound them with quite remarkable lucidity. Though scholarly he was never finicky, and was quite innocent of the disastrous pride in unpublished knowledge which besets so many naturalists. The skill with which he collated and set out in *Irish Topographical Botany* and *The Botanist in Ireland* his own records and those of his predecessors means that, although Ireland remains less thoroughly explored botanically than Britain, the results of the exploration are far more effectively integrated and codified.

Born near Belfast in 1865, Praeger received as a schoolboy his first training in biological study from the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, which included then a large number of exceptionally keen and talented workers. He trained as an engineer at Queen's College; and his earliest substantial publication was on the sub-fossil molluscs in the estuarine clays of Belfast which he came across in the course of his work on the construction of a dock. In this now classic paper he brought forward for the first time evidence that since the last glaciation the climate has been warmer than it is to-day, and may therefore claim to be the discoverer of the neolithic climatic optimum. His prospects as an engineer seemed dependent on accepting a post which would cut him off from his botanical and geological contacts, so with characteristic courage and decision he gave up his career, and after two or three years of an uncertain future came to Dublin in 1892, where a post had been found for

him in the National Library. Here he remained for over thirty years, succeeding eventually as Librarian a few years before circumstances consequent on the setting up of the Irish Free State enabled him to retire on favourable terms at a relatively early age.

It was soon after he came to Dublin that he formed the project of compiling an *Irish Topographical Botany*. The library side of the task (which was to include the making and sorting of over 30,000 slips, and assembling a bibliography of almost 1,000 references) would have daunted many men; but it was the least part of the work. For a survey of the literature in 1895 revealed that of the forty county-divisions in Ireland only eleven were at all adequately explored (one by Praeger himself a few years earlier); for seven others some sketchy lists existed; but over half were virtually unknown. Praeger determined to devote his holidays for five years to the exploration of these; and 200 days of field-work, carefully planned and unflaggingly executed during this period, enabled the work to be published in 1901. Alike in the completeness of its lists, the citation of its authorities, and the indications of frequency and ecological preferences it compares very favourably with its English counterpart.

Supplements to *Irish Topographical Botany* appeared at intervals throughout Praeger's lifetime, but the compiling of local records was no longer his major occupation, and he turned from this rather solitary work to a number of co-operative enterprises. With Pethybridge he carried out an ecological survey of the mountainous region south of Dublin, and soon after this he became a member of the British Vegetation Committee. Already joint editor of the *Irish Naturalist* (a post he retained throughout its thirty-two years of life), he became in 1903 Librarian of the Royal Irish Academy and editor of its *Proceedings*, retaining the former post till 1931 and the latter till 1945. A triennial series of joint conferences and excursions by all the Irish Field Clubs under Praeger's leadership was held from 1895 to 1907. The experience and contacts developed in these led him to organize the general biological survey of Lambay Island (1905-6), which proved so rewarding that it led on in its turn to the celebrated Clare Island survey of 1909-11. Although the most sensational and substantial results of this survey were in the realm of zoology, the knowledge gained of the distribution of plants, especially cryptogams, over a wide area of western Ireland which had hitherto been worked only in the neighbourhood of the principal hotels, was of considerable importance: over 500 species new to Ireland were recorded, and 11 new to science described. Nobody but Praeger could have assembled in this remote spot such a distinguished team of specialists, organised tolerable working conditions for them, and bullied them into publishing their findings within a very few years. The problems of insular distribution, which originally prompted the survey, led him to undertake at this time a very extensive series of experiments on the power of flotation of seeds and fruits of British plants—a pioneer piece of experimental ecology which deserves to be extended and consolidated.

In this way Praeger became a sort of godfather to most of the societies in Ireland which related to any form of natural history; and there are few of them which he did not either found, or see through hard times, or rescue from the doldrums and revivify. This was notably true of the Dublin Naturalists' Field Club; of the Geographical Society of Ireland (of which he was first President); of the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland; and of the Royal Zoological Society of Ireland, to the adornment of whose gardens with flowering shrubs he devoted much care and labour during the second War (amusing tales were told of the grubby gardener who, when questioned, turned out to be the President). His interest in horticulture and exotic floras grew during the second half of his life; and in the twenties he undertook the monographing of *Sedum* and *Sempervivum* for the Royal Horticultural Society. This bore fruit in two admirably clear and practical volumes, which make one regret the curious diffidence he showed in tackling taxonomic problems in the native flora. In preparing these monographs he travelled to the Canaries and Bulgaria; and about the same time he took part in the International Phytogeographical Excursions through the Alps and Scandinavia. These travels, together with some personal contacts (his father was Dutch and his wife German), gave him an awareness of contemporary continental botany which was at that time not very common among British field workers.

The year 1934 saw two great achievements. One was the publication of *The Botanist in Ireland*, a brilliant synthesis of fifty years' field experience, with a comital flora thrown in for good measure. The second was the launching of the work of the Irish Quaternary Research Committee. Praeger alone saw that the problems that were vexing archaeologists and phytogeographers could both be illuminated from the same source—bog-borings and pollen-analysis; and he alone knew that Jessen of Copenhagen was the man to start off the work. To his obstinate hammering in of these two points at one committee after another we owe Jessen's impressive volume on the post-glacial vegetation of Ireland and the training of G. F. Mitchell in quaternary research.

Three years later *The Way That I Went* appeared and soon ran through three editions. It is a happy blend of topographical commentary on Ireland with autobiographical reminiscence, and is the best of his numerous popular works (though mention should be made of his excellent guide to Co. Down, written in 1898 for the local railway company). Its success helped to make him a public figure in Ireland, well known to many whose interest in natural history was slight.

Up to the age of eighty Praeger remained remarkably youthful in mind and body, though it was generally felt that he had left till too late the composition of his two last books, a general natural history of Ireland, and a series of biographical sketches of Irish naturalists. Both are useful for reference, but they fall far short of his best work both in accuracy and originality of conception. When the I.P.E. visited Ireland in 1949, though unable to accompany them into the field, he took great pleasure in presiding at their opening session. But in his

last few years disabilities and misfortunes befell him; he was unable to walk far, he was cut off from his friends by deafness which became total in 1950, and he lost his wife, the devoted companion of all his wanderings. When the end came none of his friends could feel it was too soon.

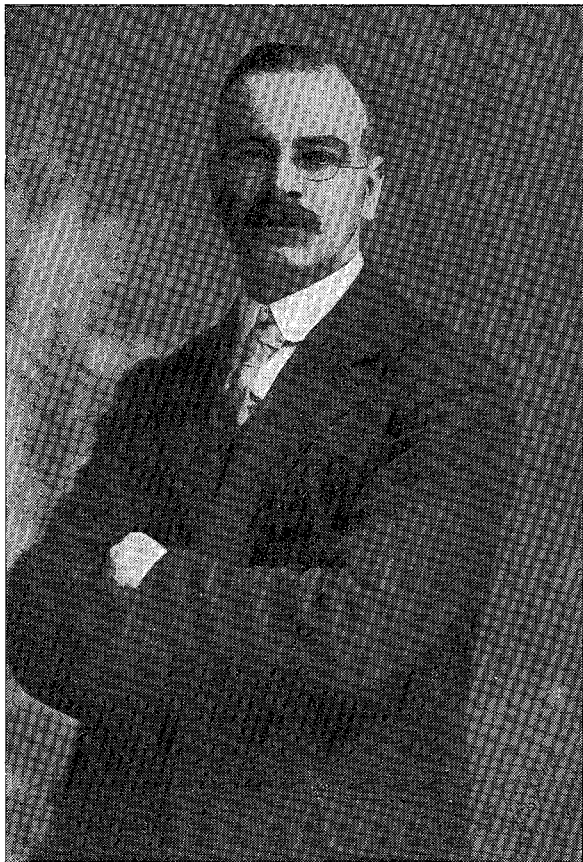
Praeger possessed in full measure the bluff, and at times gruff manner which is traditionally associated with his native Ulster; and there were times when the practical scepticism with which he greeted a project which one hoped deserved enthusiastic praise could be chilling. But although he had a shrewd and accurate estimate of his own abilities he was quite devoid of vanity, and was free from jealousy and touchiness to a quite remarkable degree. If he were criticised he replied vigorously, but bore not the least ill-will and was prepared to turn round and work with his critic immediately. And to any younger man who was really fired with enthusiasm and was prepared to work, Praeger's generosity with his time, his effort, and often with his money, was unbounded.

The bulk of his estate is bequeathed to a fund, originally collected by his admirers on his eightieth birthday and administered by the Royal Irish Academy, to promote field studies in natural history. It is a fitting memorial; but no less fitting is the memorial he will leave to at least one generation—the spur to extra effort that is given us when we compare our achievement with his.

D. A. WEBB.

FRANCIS RILSTONE (1881-1953) was born at Penhallow near Perranporth, Cornwall, on November 5th, 1881, and died in hospital at Truro after a short illness on January 22nd, 1953. He was the elder son of John Rilstone, a mine blacksmith, who became a J.P. and took a prominent part in the social and religious life of the parish. As a boy he attended Penwartha school where he became a pupil teacher and from there went to Treleigh near Redruth and then to Westminster College, London, for professional training. After teaching for some years at St. Mary's School, Truro, he became headmaster first of St. Agnes Boys' School and in 1914 of the County Primary School at Polperro. Here he remained until he retired on a break-down pension in 1934. His life at Polperro was evidently very full. He was a freemason, a Methodist local preacher and for some years chairman of the parish council. When he retired he went to live in the cottage on the hill between Penhallow and Perranzabuloe which had been his boyhood home. He was a bachelor.

He began botanising in 1905 or 1906 when F. H. Davey was preparing his *Flora of Cornwall* and with W. Tresidder for a companion spent the whole of at least one summer holiday exploring the country within a five mile radius of Penhallow. Afterwards he supplied records to E. Thurston and C. C. Vigurs for a Supplement. But he told me his first good find for the Supplement, *Nitella gracilis*, was made when he was looking for small algae in a marsh pool. From the first, Rilstone was as keenly interested in cryptogams as in phanerogams. He used to



FRANCIS RILSTONE, 1881-1953

quote Isaac Foot's conundrum, "What is the difference between a Rilstone and a rolling stone?" The answer is that Rilstone was a bryologist. He became acquainted with W. H. Pearson and D. A. Jones and at the latter's invitation joined the Moss Exchange Club, Section II, of which he soon became distributor. He was present at the meeting at Dolgellau in 1922 when the two sections of the old club were merged to form the British Bryological Society and continued for a further period to act as distributor of mosses. Then at a meeting at Ross-on-Wye in 1925 Dr. Rhodes persuaded him to take up the study of micro-fungi. It was a great joy to him when the Mycological Society held their spring foray at Perranporth in 1952 and he was able to show them the fungus treasures of his garden. A manuscript record of his work in this subject was presented to the Royal Institution of Cornwall. His work on mosses and hepatics culminated in "A Bryophyte Flora of Cornwall" which was published in 1948.

Rilstone began to study brambles seriously in 1919 and sent his first twenty gatherings to Kew to be named by R. A. Rolfe. Later on he came to know H. J. Riddelsdell and relied on him for determinations. Riddelsdell helped him generously with specimens of standard species not found in Cornwall, but could make very little of the Cornish plants he was asked to name. However a visit which Riddelsdell made to Looe in 1924 cleared up some difficulties and enabled Rilstone to publish his first important paper on the brambles of the county. About 1930 he acquired a set of between 300 and 400 gatherings of *Rubi* from C. C. Vigurs which he claimed were of great help to him. They were specimens which had been distributed through the exchange clubs in the years immediately preceding and following the turn of the century and illustrated the views of Rogers, Ley, the Lintons, Marshall, White and other batologists of the day. In addition to these plants he collected personally about a thousand numbers mainly from Cornwall, but also from the London commons, Wiltshire, the Cotswolds and North and South Wales. Then he purchased from W. C. Barton a splendid series of photographs (about 600 prints) of authentic specimens from the herbarium of W. O. Focke. All this, added to his study of the printed word, gave him confidence to publish first a Key to the brambles of Cornwall and then a Key to the species of all Britain.

But undoubtedly his most valuable work in this field was the elucidation of the Cornish species. He knew the Cornish brambles very well indeed and his list of 16 new species was not the outcome of a precipitate judgment but of long and patient observation in the field. He was convinced that the *Rubus* flora of Cornwall was very different from that of other parts of Britain and claimed that of 25 common or frequent brambles found within a two mile radius of Penhallow only 9 were described in Rogers' *Handbook*. Time will show how many of these names can stand: at present it is a gain to have them. The importance of Rilstone's work as a batologist is acknowledged in the name *Rubus rilstonei* Barton & Riddelsd.



Rilstone was a member of the Berliner botanischer Tauschverein before the war and of both the British exchange clubs, acting as distributor for the B.E.C. in 1933. In 1932 he became a member of the Royal Institution of Cornwall and in the same year was awarded the Henwood Gold Medal for his botanical work. Five years later he was elected an Associate of the Linnean Society, *honoris causa*, and in 1949 became an Honorary member of the B.B.S. in recognition of nearly 40 years of active bryological work. In 1951 he became a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd with the name Whyler Dreys which means "Searcher-out-of-Brambles".

During the years of his retirement he rarely travelled far from his house and garden, but he lived a strenuous mental life and had a wide circle of correspondents. His letters were full of detailed information and a delight to read. He had a strong sense of humour. My correspondence with him began in 1933 and developed with increasing momentum until his death. During recent years we corresponded almost every week in the winter season and when discussing brambles I have had as many as three letters in one day. He had a gift for clear and often picturesque expression and spared himself no trouble when helping others with their botanical problems.

In addition to his botanical studies Rilstone had a special interest in Cornish place names and popular speech, the results of his investigations being published regularly in the *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries* and the Perranzabuloe parish magazine. In 1949 he completed a vocabulary of the countryside, a treatise of about 150 type-written foolscap sheets, recording the words in general use in his own village in his younger days. This was offered to and accepted by the Philological Society.

Rilstone was a great Cornishman and a distinguished amateur botanist. His passing is a grievous loss to all who were privileged to know him. His herbarium, which he estimated to contain 10,000 sheets of flowering plants and 10,000 packets of mosses and hepatics, has been presented to the British Museum (Natural History) except for about 300 sheets of *Rubi* which were given to me. The more important of his botanical books have been privately sold. I am greatly indebted to Mrs. K. A. Rilstone and to Mr. E. Rilstone for help in writing this memorial notice.

The following list of publications may not be complete, but it contains all the chief botanical papers and as many of the short notes as I have been able to trace.

- 1917-8: New Cornish Mosses and Hepatics, *J. Roy. Inst. Cornwall*, **20**, 310 ff.  
 1918: Notes on Cornish Plants, *J. Bot.*, **56**, 114.  
 1919: Cornish Mosses and Hepatics, *J. Bot.*, **57**, 3-10.  
 1920: *Scilla campanulata*, *J. Bot.*, **58**, 274.  
 1922: Cornish Sphagna, *J. Bot.*, **60**, 263-67.  
 1923: The Distribution of *Euphrasia* in Cornwall, *J. Bot.*, **61**, 54-6.  
 1926: Cornish Mosses and Hepatics, *J. Bot.*, **64**, 178-83.

- 1927: Cornish Rubi, *J. Roy. Inst. Cornwall*, **22**, 269-80.
- 1928: Cornish Rubi, *J. Roy. Inst. Cornwall*, **23**, 364.
- 1929: *Erica ciliaris* × *tetralix*, *Rep. Bot. Soc. & E.C.*, **1928**, 631.
- 1930: *Myosotis caespitosa*, *J. Bot.*, **68**, 153.
- 1931-2: A Key to the Species of Rubi or Brambles in Cornwall, *J. Roy. Inst. Cornwall*, **23**, 462-76.
- 1932: Abnormal Panicles of *Rubus argenteus*, *J. Bot.*, **70**, 318-19.  
Rust Infection in Species of *Rubus*, *J. Bot.*, **70**, 319.
- 1933: *Rumex rupestris*, *J. Bot.*, **71**, 107.
- 1935: A Key to the Species of Rubi of the London Catalogue, *Rep. Bot. Soc. & E.C.*, **1934**, 931-55.  
Cornish Micro-Fungi, *J. Bot.*, **73**, 95-104.  
*Plantago lanceolata* var. *anthoviridis*, *J. Bot.*, **73**, 234-35.
- 1936: Cornish Bryophyta, *J. Bot.*, **74**, 234-36.
- 1938: Some Flowering-Time Facts and Problems, *Rep. Bot. Soc. & E.C.*, **1937**, 525-26.  
*Isoetes hystrix* at the Lizard, *J. Bot.*, **76**, 56-7.  
*Anagallis arvensis* var. *carnea*, *J. Bot.*, **76**, 85.  
Notes on Davey's Flora of Cornwall, *J. Bot.*, **76**, 134-36.  
The Flowering of *Corylus Avellana*, *J. Bot.*, **76**, 292-95.  
Cornish Micro-Fungi, *J. Bot.*, **76**, 353-61.
- 1940: A New *Rubus* from Cornwall, *J. Bot.*, **78**, 13-4.  
Three East Cornwall Brambles, *J. Bot.*, **78**, 164-67.  
A New Fungus from Devon, *J. Bot.*, **78**, 192.
- 1941: Fungus Notes, *J. Bot.*, **79**, 13-5.  
The Effect of *Trochila Tini* on *Viburnum Tinus*, *J. Bot.*, **79**, 173.  
A Hyphomycete on Resin, *J. Bot.*, **79**, 187-89.
- 1945: A New Staffordshire Bramble, *N.W. Nat.*, **20**, 161-63.
- 1947: The Stability of *Rubus* Species, *Rep. Bot. Soc. & E.C.*, **1945**, 77-9.  
The Meaning of Spore Form in Aquatic Hyphomycetes, *N.W. Nat.* **22**, 117-18.  
Notes upon Bramble Seedlings, *N.W. Nat.*, **22**, 180-82.
- 1948: *Geranium Endressii* and *G. versicolor*, *Rep. Bot. Soc. & E.C.*, **1946-47**, 258-59.  
*Rubus Daltrii*, *Rep. Bot. Soc. & E.C.*, **1946-47**, 260.  
Fluctuations of *Sibthorpia europaea*, *N.W. Nat.*, **23**, 130-31.  
Exotic Fungi on Bamboo, *N.W. Nat.*, **23**, 167-68.  
A Bryophyte Flora of Cornwall, *Trans. Brit. Bryol. Soc.*, **1**, 75-100, 153-65.
- 1950: Some Cornish Rubi, *J. Linn. Soc. (Bot.)*, **53**, 413-21.
- 1952: Rubi from Dartmoor to the Land's End, *Watsonia*, **2**, 151-62.
- 1953: Exotic Fungi on Bamboo, *N.W. Nat. (New Series)*, **1**, 101.  
Cornish Fungi, *N.W. Nat. (New Series)*, **1**, 563-67.

KARLIS STARCS (1897-1953), a Latvian botanist, was born on 18 May 1897 at Līdere, Latvia, and died on 2 February 1953 at Indianapolis, U.S.A. He was educated at the University of St. Petersburg, Russia, and at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science of the University in Riga, Latvia, where he graduated Mag. rer. nat. in 1936. He was employed as a botanist at the Bio-entomological Station, Priekuli, and later at the Institute for Plant Protection, Riga. Starcs was a critical botanist with a good general knowledge in nearly all groups of plants. He studied the taxonomy and distribution of Latvian plants, being particularly interested in trees and shrubs (*Salicaceae* and *Betulaceae*), garden plants, weeds and parasitic fungi of cultivated plants. More recently he had studied *Taraxacum*, mosses and lichens. About 65 papers, including some monographic studies on the Latvian forms of *Pinus* and *Salix*, as well as on *Philadelphus* and *Syringa*, have been published by him. He was a very keen collector and his beautifully prepared specimens enrich many foreign herbaria. Starcs edited *Betulaceae asiaticae* (1931) in 60 sets and *Diseases of the Latvian Cultivated Plants* (1937-1944) in 150 sets. In 1944 when he was forced to leave Latvia, as a refugee, for Germany, he left behind him a large private herbarium containing about 100,000 specimens, and nearly as many duplicates. In 1945 he was appointed a temporary conservator at Haussknecht's herbarium in Weimar, and from 1946-1947 he was a lecturer in Dendrology and Phytopathology at the University of U.N.R.R.A. at Munich. Living in primitive conditions in a camp of displaced persons in Thuringia and Bavaria, he studied the local flora with great assiduity and collected about 80,000 specimens, including 35,000 *Taraxaca*. In 1947 he went to the U.S.A. where he began the formation of another collection. His dream of returning to his native country to work on his fine herbarium was not however to be fulfilled. He joined the Society in 1951, and was a member of 22 other scientific societies in the U.S.A., Germany and Latvia.

The following taxa have been named in his honour:—*Phegopteris robertiana* var. *starciana* Kummerle, *Rosa glauca* subsp. *starciana* Matsson, *Ascochyta starcii* Sydow and *Anthostomella starcii* Sydow.

A. MELDERIS.

M. L. WEDGWOOD (1854-1953).—Mrs. M. L. Wedgwood, who died at Slough on April 17, 1953, in her 99th year, was an outstanding character of what we may call the "Druce period" in the history of our Society. She was Mary Louisa Bell, born on November 23, 1854, and was twice married, her grand-daughter by the first marriage being our member, Miss Mary McCallum Webster. Her favourite son, Allen, the only child of her second marriage, was educated at Marlborough and Cambridge. They went botanising together and began to form a herbarium. Then Allen was caught by the first World War and in 1915, at the age of 22, he was sent to Gallipoli. He was reported missing and was never found. This entirely altered his mother's mode of existence. She devoted her

whole life to the completion of a herbarium of British plants for Marlborough College. Time and money were no object. She hired a car, with chauffeur, by the year and scoured these islands in search of every species, variety and hybrid, as listed in the *London Catalogue*. The quest introduced her to every botanist of the period, and she made the school collection at Marlborough something which is quite unique: a nearly perfect representation of the British flora, with all the critical forms verified by the specialists of that time. She also gave a playing-field to Marlborough in memory of her son, and was a passionate, if quite unexpected, believer in the public schools and all they have given to our country. During the second World War, when she had retired from London to Marlborough, she published (in 1944) the *Wedgwood Catalogue* of the herbarium. This will be of permanent use to British botanists, as well as to the Marlborough boys of future generations. The beautiful book-plate with the noble quotation from Plato's *Apology* had been designed many years earlier by her friend, Emery Walker. Let us hope that the authorities at Marlborough will always value and take care of the Wedgwood Herbarium.

It would be quite out of place now to give any long description of Mrs. Wedgwood's most unusual personality: the "Druce period" and all that it meant have vanished for ever, but she would have delighted as much as anyone in the rebirth (or should we call it the transformation?) of the Society and its modern approach to the study of our flora. She became one of Druce's intimate friends—he had come to her help when she lost Allen—but stood quite outside the circle of his more fashionable acquaintances. Long ago, at the turn of the century, she had entertained the "Bloomsbury" of her day in her house on Campden Hill, and she had travelled widely in India and the Mediterranean before she became interested in plants. To the country botanists on whom she later descended she may have seemed formidable or even a little odd, with her outspoken opinions, keen intelligence and experience of the world, and there may even be amusing recollections of some of those Cleopatra-like whims which go with the imperious manner of a great beauty. Those who were lucky to become her friends remember her with deep affection as the neat little figure in black in a very large car, sometimes severe, but full of kindness and fun and enchanting conversation, able even in extreme old age to cast a spell over one or two of the younger men whom she decided to take up and civilise. She served for six years on the General Committee which was formed after Druce's death, and her name is commemorated in a Bramble, *Rubus wedgwoodiae* Barton & Riddelsd.

N. Y. SANDWITH.