

OBITUARY

JOHN PERCIVAL (1863-1949). The work of the late Professor John Percival in the teaching and research of agricultural botany, and especially on wheat, is so widely known and respected that his interest in field botany is apt to be overlooked.

He was born at Carperby, near Aysgarth, in Wensleydale, Yorks., on 3rd April 1863, and while still a student wrote a "Flora of Wensleydale" (*The Naturalist* for May and June 1888) which listed 653 species and varieties, of which nearly all had been seen by himself. A record of a moss, *Plagiothecium nitidulum* Wahl., from Penyghent, as found by him with J. Whitehead in 1879, is given in *Bot. Trans. York Nat. Union*, 1, 89 (1891). A number of very rare Hawkweeds gathered by him in Yorkshire are cited in Pugsley's *Prodromus*.

Percival graduated from St John's College, Cambridge, in 1888 and was appointed Professor of Botany at Wye Agricultural College on its foundation in 1894. Six years later his *Agricultural Botany* was published: a work which was to run to eight editions and to serve as a standard text-book for a generation. In 1902 he took up an appointment at University College, Reading, where he became Professor of Agriculture and later Professor of Agricultural Botany. This appointment he held until his retirement in 1932, by which time the College had become the University of Reading.

At Reading he founded a living museum of the cultivated wheats of the world which took the form of living plants, of which the seed has to be sown every second year. From this he distributed dried material and live seed and on it he based his books on *The Wheat Plant*, 1921, and *Wheat in Great Britain*, 1934 and 1948. He published many papers and several other books on various aspects of agricultural botany.

Professor Percival was a member of this Society from 1910 until about 1931 and contributed occasional notes to our *Reports* and was a valued correspondent of our late Secretary, Dr G. Claridge Druce. He joined the Linnean Society in 1893, was on the Council 1925-29, and a Vice-President of that Society, 1926-27. His herbarium is in the Department of Agricultural Botany of Reading University. He travelled to Lapland, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and to the Welsh mountains. He died on 26th January 1949.

A more detailed notice by Professor W. B. Brierley will be found in *Nature*, 163, 275. I am indebted to this and to Professor T. M. Harris of Reading University for some of the information contained in this account.

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