

As a taxonomist, Dr. Britton was distinctly a middle-of-the-road man in the matter of specific and generic delimitations. As to families, he leaned strongly towards segregation when strong and reasonably constant characters existed. He was extremely cautious and slow in reaching conclusions on such critical questions, but extremely fixed in his decision, once made. He was, moreover, unmoved by the extent and authority of the opposition, after being once convinced. In no other connection was this steadfastness to conviction so thoroughly exhibited as in the matter of principles and rules of nomenclature; perhaps it is more accurate to say "in the basing of rules on principle." He appeared to regard the history of taxonomy as a highly important part of the science, and believed that the foundations of this history should be expressed in the names. The truth as to publication, he believed, should be stated in the name, a thing that could not be done except by indicating priority. This, in spite of all ups and downs, lapses and subterfuges, he believed must at some time be accepted, and he preferred to work on that basis. Hence, when botanical taxonomists, by a large majority, adopted "Truth, Ltd." as their procedure, if not their slogan, he replied, "Truth, Absolute!" And thus took his place with the small minority who think more of accuracy than they do of convenience.

HENRY H. RUSBY

#### RECENT DEATHS

WILLIAM HASTINGS BASSETT, the newly elected president of the American Society for Testing Materials, died on July 21, at the age of sixty-six years. Mr. Bassett was metallurgical manager of the American Brass Company, Waterbury, Conn. He was a past-president of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers (1930) and a former director of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

GOODWIN DELOSS SWEZEY, professor emeritus of astronomy at the University of Nebraska, died on July 10, at the age of eighty-three years.

DR. HENRY ARNSTEIN, chemist and engineer of Philadelphia, died on July 24, at the age of forty-eight years.

DR. CHARLES AUBREY PARKER, orthopedic surgeon, for forty years on the staff of Rush Medical College, died on July 16. He was sixty-seven years old.

DR. JOSEPH BAXTER EMERSON, for fifty-two years an eye and ear specialist in New York and for forty years connected with the Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital, died on July 24 at the age of eighty years.

DR. STEPHAN RICHARZ, professor of geology at the Fu-Jen University, Peiping, China, died on July 14. He was sixty years old.

DR. BENJAMIN W. HUNT died at his home in Eatonton, Georgia, on June 26, at the age of eighty-seven years. He was a banker by profession, but his reputation was made along agricultural and horticultural lines. He was a member of the Georgia State Academy of Science, past-president of the Georgia State Horticultural Society, and was at one time a member of the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Experiment Station. He was a leader in his community in the development of the dairy industry, and was in the forefront of the fight against contagious abortion and the eradication of the cattle tick. Dr. Hunt was an authority on hardy palms and in plant breeding, being the first man to artificially cross the mule fig in the South. He was awarded the honorary degree of doctor of science by the University of Georgia in 1922. In his death Georgia and the South lose a great factor for leadership, and the last link with Berekmans and early American horticulture is gone.—T. H. McH.

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### THE RADCLIFFE OBSERVATORY

THE *London Times* reports that Mr. Justice Bennett has sanctioned in principle an application by the trustees of Dr. John Radcliffe (who died in 1714) for leave to proceed with a scheme by which £72,000 of the £100,000 obtained from the sale of the property on which Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford, stands will be applied in building, equipping and maintaining near Pretoria, South Africa, an astronomical observatory.

Mr. Justice Bennett, in giving judgment, said:

The testator left his residuary real and personal estate to certain named trustees to be paid and applied to such

charitable purposes as they in their discretion should think best.

In 1770, at the instance of the Savilian professor of astronomy in the University of Oxford, the trustees of the will obtained an order of the Court, made by the Lord Chancellor, to purchase, out of the testator's estate, a piece of land on which to build an observatory for reading lectures in astronomy and to furnish the building with the necessary instruments. In the first place they obtained a lease of some land for the purpose and erected the observatory on it. At the beginning of the nineteenth century an Act of Parliament was obtained enabling the trustees to buy the land from St. John's College, Oxford, and the land continued in their ownership until 1930. In that year the trustees entered into a