

authorities should abolish foreign quarantine and other restrictive measures against this disease.

(d) The section resolves that the malady known hitherto under the name of Malta fever shall in future be named "undulant fever." (Submitted by the section of tropical medicine and hygiene.)

(C) That this congress records its conviction that experiments on living animals have proved of the utmost service to medicine in the past, and are indispensable to its future progress. That, accordingly, while strongly deprecating the infliction of unnecessary pain, it is of opinion alike in the interests of man and of animals that it is not desirable to restrict competent persons in the performance of such experiments. (Submitted by various sections.)

#### THE CONTINUATION OF MILNE'S WORK IN SEISMOLOGY.

A WELL-INFORMED writer in *The Times* of August 7 has insisted on the importance of securing the continuity of the late Prof. Milne's great scheme of seismological observation and research. Milne himself always fought strenuously against his own undertaking being absorbed and lost in any international scheme. It is true that in connection with the international system there are some admirably equipped laboratories, furnished with a variety of instruments of extreme delicacy and sensitiveness; but the establishment of one of these is so costly an undertaking that such laboratories can never become numerous. Milne's aim was to secure a great number of seismological stations, scattered as widely as possible over the globe, each furnished with instruments of the same pattern, the records of which would be strictly comparable. The practical results which have been secured by Milne's scheme have shown that the comparatively simple type of apparatus which he advocated has furnished just such an observational basis for research as is necessary. Milne, at the outset, saw in the British colonies and dependencies the means for a wide extension of his scheme—though he by no means limited his efforts within the Empire. It would, indeed, be a disgrace, as well as a misfortune, to British science if the great undertaking originated by Milne were to suffer dislocation, or to be lost by absorption in any other scheme; and, at the same time, no more worthy monument to Milne's enterprise could be imagined than the maintenance and development of the system of observations to which he devoted his genius and energy, and for which he received little practical encouragement during his lifetime.

It is a very fortunate circumstance that the British Association is holding a meeting so shortly after Milne's lamented death, for no time must be lost if his invaluable organisation is to be rescued from the ruin which is threatened by the loss of its master-spirit. From the year 1841 onward, the association has been the nursing mother of seismological science in this country, and has helped Mallet, and afterwards Milne, by contributions from its funds, and especially by publication of their results. Milne was always ready gratefully to acknowledge the great

aid afforded to him by the association, and devoted much of his time during the last year of his life to drawing up a valuable index to the numerous contributions to seismology scattered through seventy-two volumes of the association's reports. This index is now in type, and will be presented at the forthcoming Birmingham meeting. It may be hoped that on this occasion a means may be found for consummating the great aid which the association has always furnished to seismological science, by inaugurating an effort to place Milne's system of observation and research on a sound and permanent basis. It may be suggested that as a national system of meteorological observation has been evolved from the meteorological committees of the British Association, a national seismological scheme may, in like manner, be developed from the association's committees on the subject.

On August 8 a second letter appeared in *The Times* from the president of the Royal Society, strongly urging the importance of continuing Milne's organisation, and making it a national undertaking. Sir Archibald Geikie, besides bearing eloquent testimony to Milne's genius and enthusiasm as a scientific worker and his loveableness as a man, is able to quote from a letter just received from Prince Galitzin, the president of the International Seismological Association, in which it is asserted that Milne "through his most important investigations set seismology on a firm scientific basis, founded upon instrumental observation," that "he can duly be considered as the real founder and promoter of this new and important branch of geophysics," and that the continuation and development of his great work "would be the best monument to his memory."

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#### THE ULTIMA THULE OF POLYNESIA.<sup>1</sup>

EASTER ISLAND, so called because of its discovery by the Dutchman Roggweeen on Easter Day, 1722, presents several as yet unanswered problems in ethnology and linguistics. One of these is the provenance of the gigantic stone statues found in the island, another the decipherment of the singular incised tablets which appear to show a form of writing or hieroglyph, though written characters are found nowhere else east of Java. A third problem, the origin and settlement of the present population, or rather of the generation which is now so rapidly passing, is less difficult, and is that which Mr. Churchill has set himself the task of investigating in the present volume.

In his former book on the Polynesian wanderings (see *NATURE*, September 21, 1911, p. 381), the author discussed the entry into the Pacific of the primitive Polynesians, whom he called the proto-Samoans, and their settlement in the region he defined as Nuclear Polynesia, comprising the island-groups surrounding Samoa, and including

<sup>1</sup> "Easter Island. The Rapanui Speech and the Peopling of South-east Polynesia." By William Churchill. Pp. iv+340. (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1912.)