

tions were familiar to the people of northern India in the fourth and third centuries B.C., the assumption of an Iranian origin for the rulers of Magadha has no historical warranty at present, and involves the rejection of important traditional and literary evidence as to their descent.

Dr. Spooner's research work at Kumrahar needs no commendation, and he was probably led into his novel speculations about the Mauryas by his intense enthusiasm—the very quality which, combined with sedulous activity, rendered him so valuable a servant of the Government of India. *Ave atque vale.* S. M. E.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Sir Anderson Critchett, Bart., K.C.V.O., surgeon-oculist to the King, first president of the Council of British Ophthalmologists, president in 1894 and 1899 of the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom and in 1913 of the Ophthalmic Section of the International Medical Congress held in London, on February 9, aged seventy-nine.

Dr. Horace T. Brown, F.R.S., distinguished for his work on the chemistry of carbohydrates, on the assimilation of atmospheric carbon dioxide by leaves, and on gaseous diffusion through small apertures, on February 6, aged seventy-six.

Current Topics and Events.

WIDESPREAD interest has been aroused among the general public by the publication of Prof. Dart's account of the discovery of *Australopithecus africanus*, or the Taungs Man, as the Press has elected to call him, in last week's issue of NATURE. Although the discovery dated from November last, the news had been carefully guarded, and it was only when a cable was received in England on February 4, and appeared in the Press on the following day, on the eve of the publication of the article in NATURE, that it became known. Notwithstanding the absence of precise details, the importance of the news was at once recognised by the leading London and provincial daily papers, which quoted freely from Prof. Dart's article as soon as it was available. In another part of this issue, Sir Arthur Keith, Prof. G. Elliot Smith and Dr. W. L. H. Duckworth discuss the significance of the discovery.

THE debt which the modern civilised world owes to science has seldom been acknowledged so generously, or expressed so eloquently, by responsible statesmen as by President Coolidge and by Mr. C. E. Hughes, Secretary of State, in their addresses to the recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Washington, D.C., which have been printed in a recent issue of *Science*. No other single agency, says the President of the United States, has relied so much upon the work of men and women of science as has his government, which has been foremost in employing and most liberal in endowing science, although it cannot claim to have been "impressively liberal" to the scientific workers whom it has employed. The scientific work done under the administrative departments has, he says, been of enormous value to the whole people. Men of science are "the wonder-workers of all the ages"; the discoveries made by them have become commonplace because their number has paralysed the capacity of the mind for wonderment. Representatives of social and political organisations regard the march of science with awe, and sometimes with fear, when they ask themselves what will be the next revolution to which their schemes will have to be adapted; but the conviction that science works for the public weal, and that at the worst it saves life from being very monotonous, restores their confidence. It has taken endless ages to create in men the courage that will accept the truth simply because it is the

truth. Comparatively few men are sufficiently gifted to be able to use the scientific method in seeking for the truth, but they no longer fear the results to which it leads. Truth is essential, and therefore all encouragement should be given to men of science and of faith.

MR. HUGHES spoke on the value of science in promoting international co-operation and concord. Science may forge new and terrible weapons of destruction, but she is far more eloquent as she points to the wastes of strife, to the retarding of progress, and to the vast opportunities which are open to those peoples who will abandon mutual fears and destroy artificial barriers to community of enterprise. Each nation should collect, collate, and safeguard all data and records made within its territory, and should make them readily available to other nations. International co-operation in research is absolutely necessary, and both national research organisations and the International Research Council are doing good work and opening up a new era of international co-operation in science. Scientific method is needed in government, in making and administering the law. The scientific attitude of mind is needed because it comprises search for pure knowledge, distrust of phrases and catchwords, hatred of shams, willingness to discard outworn beliefs, and, above all, faith in humanity and zeal for the public good.

THE Right Hon. T. R. Ferens, High Steward of Hull, has presented to Hull the princely sum of 250,000*l.* as a nucleus towards a University College for the city. In his letter to the Lord Mayor announcing his intention of making the gift, Mr. Ferens stated that he had carefully consulted university professors and others interested in educational matters, and was satisfied that the time was arriving when Hull should join other cities, such as Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, etc., in giving opportunities to its sons and daughters for higher education. We believe it was at the meeting of the British Association at Hull, when the retiring president, Sir Edward Thorpe, and the president, Sir Charles Sherrington, were the guests of Mr. Ferens, that the idea was first suggested. In addition to this magnificent gift, a new Art Gallery, costing something like 90,000*l.*, together with its site in the centre of the city, has been presented by Mr. Ferens.