

emy. Although his health was failing, he maintained his position as leader of science in the U.S.S.R. up to the time of his retirement, after the celebrations of the Academy in June of last year. These celebrations were an occasion for congratulating Komarov on his service to Soviet science, and for summarizing his life-work. In the Botanical Institute named after him in Leningrad there was an exhibition of maps and photographs illustrating his travels. Despite his illness, Komarov attended the sessions of the Academy, and was admitted to foreign membership of the Linnean Society at one of its meetings. Shortly after these celebrations he retired to a rest home near Moscow.

Even in the last year of his life, Komarov displayed an almost child-like enthusiasm for systematic botany and exploration, and on one occasion cross-examined me in a very impressive way for two hours about the vegetation of eastern Australia.

The honour in which Komarov was held by the Soviet Government is shown by the decree of the Council of Peoples' Commissars to perpetuate his name. The decree includes provision of pensions for his widow and his sister; the issue of Komarov's collected works by the Academy; and four scholarships for post-graduate work. E. ASHBY.

#### Lady Thiselton-Dyer

HARRIET, daughter of Sir Joseph Hooker, granddaughter of Sir William Hooker and of Prof. Henslow the Cambridge botanist, wife of Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, died, ninety-one years old, in her house near Bere Alton a few days before Christmas Day. She had lived in Kew from childhood to ripe age; her father became assistant-director there under his father the year after she was born, and took over the control ten years later. Sir William Hooker's job had been to turn the private garden of a queen into a garden for the nation and the world; Sir Joseph added nobly to its fame and usefulness, and so did Thiselton-Dyer until he too ceased from his labours. His wife made Kew a very hospitable place; for many years a vacant place was set, and was seldom unoccupied, at every midday meal.

After Dyer's retirement in 1905, his wife and he lived in the Cotswolds until his death in 1928; and then she, widowed and old, went down into Devonshire and made a lovely garden of her own. She had an endless knowledge of plants, and an almost magical skill in gardening. Rare and delicate things, *Rosa hemisphaerica* for one, grew for her without any trouble at all; *Calceolaria violacea* and *C. tenella* grew rampant over her walls. Fuchsias were one of her latest hobbies; some thirty sorts grew in her garden like weeds, among them the rare *F. erecta*, with its curious upright flowers. She had a Damask rose which she got in her childhood from a very old lady, who had gathered it in Persia in her childhood, more than a hundred and fifty years ago. Once upon a time I happened to find *Goodyera repens* growing large and plentiful in a Polish forest; I pressed some between old newspapers and sent them to her as herbarium specimens, but she grew them!

Besides her botany, her Hooker ancestry brought her taste and artistic skill; she was an admirable flower-painter, as Sir William Hooker also had been. The very first time I remember seeing her was in her girlhood, some seventy years ago. She was sitting beside Walter Fitch, who had drawn plants for Sir William for many years; and they were both

drawing from herbarium specimens, which had been dipped in boiling water until they opened out, wonderfully, into the natural shape of the flower. She inherited other things besides, such as health, strength, untiring diligence and length of days; she was in her garden until not very long before her death. She kept up a large correspondence, for she was a fluent, easy, intimate letter-writer, after the fashion of a hundred years ago. Her friends loved her and looked up to her; she was *très grande dame*. D'ARCY W. THOMPSON.

#### Prof. A. E. Taylor, F.B.A.

THE death of Prof. A. E. Taylor in the late autumn of 1945 at the age of seventy-five deprived these islands of an illustrious humanist and eminent scholar whose spirited vivacity in writing seemed never to tire; and not these islands only but Europe too, as his honorary membership of the Prussian Academy and of the Accademia dei Lincei partially attested before the War put an end, for the time being, to such graceful glimpses of European comity. Add to this Taylor's eminence as a moralist, his considerable success as a constructive metaphysician in early life and his later high reputation as a liberal defender of orthodox Christianity, and it is plain that the range and variety of his talents was altogether amazing. He excelled in conversation; his letters were literature; and he was very kind.

Taylor's main contribution to straight philosophy, his "Elements of Metaphysics" published in 1903 when he was Frothingham professor of philosophy in McGill University, Montreal, is remarkable for the amount of science, then very new, which he succeeded in incorporating into the somewhat reluctant mould of a metaphysics on F. H. Bradley's lines—non-Euclidean geometry and the labyrinth of the continuum as well as the then more usual excursions into evolution, biology and psychology. This scientific interest, which included proficiency in as well as zest for symbolic methods, remained with Taylor to the end, but found relatively little direct expression except for editing De Morgan's "Formal Logic" in the thirty-five years or thereby during which he taught moral philosophy in Scotland, first at St. Andrews and later at Edinburgh. Then his ruling passion became Platonism and, through Platonism, medievalism, modern ethics and contemporary Christian theology. Burnet's company at St. Andrews had something to do with the Platonism; and Stout, another eminent colleague there, said he found Taylor "ripe for revolt" against the presuppositions of the Common room at Merton (of which College Taylor had been, as Bradley still was, a fellow). In matters of religion no special explanation was needed. The son of a Wesleyan minister, Taylor was always devout, although in Canada he had had a free-thinking phase.

As a Platonist, moralist and theologian, Taylor was especially anxious to maintain that there were great and genuine speculative questions which were extra-scientific in the sense that no answer to them could be 'verified' even 'weakly' by sensory observation. This involved a certain antagonism, very freely expressed, to what he took to be the overweening pretensions of certain men of science; and he was prepared to argue, for example, in "Does God Exist?", a book that came out almost on the day of his death, that there were world-views, not contra-scientific in any way, according to which, for example, the Virgin