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 Alston 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 hemisphærica* 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

Birth presented no really considerable difficulty. There were, however, no traces of obscurantism in his composition, and in his greatest contribution to the study of Greek philosophy, his magnificent "Commentary on Plato's Timaeus", he lavished his powers in seven hundred closely printed pages upon the enigmatic science of that enigmatic dialogue at least as much as upon its equally enigmatic theology, with perhaps too great a profusion of modern analogues but at any rate with a stimulating largeness and infectious ardour that will long survive him. J. LAIRD.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Mr. J. B. Butler Burke, sometime lecturer and Berkeley fellow at Owens College, Manchester, known for his books on the origin of life, on January 14, aged seventy-two.

Dr. M. Nierenstein, reader in biochemistry in the University of Bristol, on January 24, aged sixty-eight.

Dame Ethel Shakespear, D.B.E., known for her geological and palæontological work, on January 17, aged seventy-four.

Dr. Ernest Warren, formerly director of the Natal Museum, on January 29, aged seventy-four.

NEWS and VIEWS

The Great Sunspot and Magnetic Disturbance

A CONSIDERABLE magnetic disturbance in the earth's magnetic field was recorded at the Royal Observatory's Magnetic Station at Abinger on February 7–8. This 'magnetic storm' began abruptly at 10h. 20m. G.M.T. on February 7 and lasted for about 36 hours. It was accompanied by a display of the aurora borealis, obscured in the southern part of Britain by cloud. The ranges of the magnetic elements were: 1·3° in declination; more than 500γ in horizontal force and nearly 400γ in vertical force. The storm was remarkable more for the agitation of the traces rather than for the ranges, which have been exceeded on seven or eight other occasions during the last 11-year solar cycle, 1934–44. This magnetic storm is, with little doubt, related to localized solar phenomena of which the great spot was a notable representative (see *Nature* of Feb. 9, p. 155). At the onset of the storm, the spot group was about 1·9 days (= 25° of solar longitude) past the central meridian. This position of a big spot when a great magnetic storm begins is in general accord with previous statistical results such as those given by Maunder forty years ago.

Solar observations, if available from the United States, India and elsewhere, must be collated and compared with data of radio fade-outs. Reports of fade-outs from Cable and Wireless, Ltd., indicate with a high degree of probability that two intense solar flares occurred on February 6, the day preceding the magnetic storm. The G.M.T. of these fade-outs (03h. 30m., 06h. 20m. and 16h. 15m.–18h. 30m. approximately) precluded solar observations being made in England while these fade-outs were in progress.

Radio-Frequency Energy from the Sun

REPORTS recently circulated in the daily Press to the effect that scientific workers from the Radiophysics Laboratory in Sydney had been successful in receiving radar echoes from the sun and moon are stated by the Laboratory to be completely without foundation. No attempt to establish such contact has been made by the Laboratory. A recent letter from Pawsey, Payne-Scott and McCready, of the Radiophysics Laboratory, Sydney, published in *Nature* of February 9, 1946, reports, however, that 'noises' have been received from the sun as suggested by Appleton (*Nature*, 156, 534, November 3, 1945); calculations of the apparent temperature have been made and correlation with sunspot activity observed. The Press reports referred to above seem to have been due to a misunderstanding of this work.

Sorby Fellowship: Dr. W. S. Bullough

THE Royal Society has appointed Dr. W. S. Bullough, lecturer in zoology at McGill University, Montreal, to be Sorby research fellow in the University of Sheffield in succession to Dr. K. Mellanby. Dr. Bullough is a graduate of the University of Leeds. While holding first a research fellowship and later a lectureship in the Department of Zoology there, Dr. Bullough carried out investigations on the internal and external environmental control of reproductive cycles in fishes, birds and mammals. His researches on the endocrine glands in relation to bird behaviour throw much light on the reality of the distinction between British and Continental races of starlings, and evidence has been adduced for regarding Continental immigrant starlings as carriers of foot and mouth disease, responsible for outbreaks in British cattle. An important conclusion arising from his work on mammals is the power of the œstrogens to stimulate cells in the ovary to mitotic activity, thus leading at the post-ovulation period to a replenishment of the ovary with a new stock of oogonia. This mitogenic function of the sex hormones would seem to be the field of research now to be explored by Dr. Bullough in his tenure of the Sorby fellowship in the Department of Zoology at Sheffield. He hopes to take up his new work during the summer.

Chair of Medicine at Sheffield: Dr. C. H. Stuart-Harris

As a result of the recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee on Medical Schools appointed in 1942 under the chairmanship of Sir William Goodenough, Government grants have made possible the establishment of full-time university professorships in medicine, surgery, midwifery and other branches of clinical medicine, and for the proper staffing of the corresponding departments.

At Sheffield, the University, as a first step, has established a full-time chair of medicine, and Dr. C. H. Stuart-Harris has been appointed as the first occupant. Dr. Stuart-Harris was a student at St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School, London. After various resident hospital posts he held a number of important clinical research scholarships and fellowships, including a Rockefeller travelling fellowship and later the Foulerton research fellowship of the Royal Society, and he has had important experience in clinical teaching in the Department of Medicine of the British Postgraduate Medical School. Throughout the War he served with the Army Medical Services. He is the author of numerous publications embodying the results of clinical and