

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 palaeontological 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:  $1.3^\circ$  in declination; more than 500 $\gamma$  in horizontal force and nearly 400 $\gamma$  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 ( $= 25^\circ$  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 Radio-physics 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 McCreedy, of the Radio-physics 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 oestrogens 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 Inter-departmental 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

laboratory research, both before and during the War, and covering such subjects as rheumatic fever, influenza and typhus.

#### British Council Office in China: Mr. C. M. G. Bolton

MR. C. M. G. BOLTON has left for China to join the staff of the British Council in Chungking as a geological specialist. Born in Plymouth in 1904, the son of the late Commander A. W. Bolton, R.N., from Berkhamsted School he went to Merton College, Oxford, and graduated in the Honours School of Natural Science in geology. He worked with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Persia, and later was field geologist to the Finsbury Pavement House group of mining companies, working in the Gold Coast area, and was associated with oil-boring in Sussex. In 1940 he joined the R.A.F. and served in Iceland, where he studied the geology, and in 1942 was appointed to the Military Mission in Moscow. In 1944 he was seconded to a military unit to carry out researches on military geology. Mr. Bolton is a fellow of the Geological Society and an associate member of the Institute of Petroleum. As a practising field geologist, he has travelled widely—across Persia from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and beyond to Moscow, twice across the Sahara from West Africa to Algeria and Morocco, across Africa from West Africa to Kenya, and through the Sudan and the Levant.

#### Secretary of the American Chemical Society: Mr. A. H. Emery

MR. ALDEN HAYES EMERY has been elected secretary and business manager of the American Chemical Society. Mr. Emery, a former official of the United States Bureau of Mines, succeeds Dr. Charles L. Parsons, who retired on December 31 after serving the Society as secretary for thirty-eight years and as business manager for fourteen. Mr. Emery has been the Society's assistant manager since 1936 and assistant secretary since 1943. Born in Lancaster, N.H., on June 2, 1901, he graduated in 1922 from Oberlin College, where he specialized in chemistry, and obtained his master's degree from Ohio State University in 1923. Mr. Emery then joined the staff of the Bureau of Mines as a chemist at the Pittsburgh Experiment Station. In 1927 he went to Washington to take up administrative work in the Bureau. When he resigned in 1936 to become assistant manager of the American Chemical Society, he was assistant chief engineer of the Bureau's Experiment Stations Division. Mr. Emery was secretary of the American Chemical Society's Division of Gas and Fuel Chemistry during 1933-37, and was assistant editor of *Chemical Abstracts* in charge of its fuel section during 1931-39. He has also edited several sections of *Metallurgical Abstracts* dealing with the chemical aspects of metallurgy. As a member of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, he helped to establish the Institute's Industrial Minerals Division, of which he was secretary in 1938 and vice-chairman in 1939.

#### Meteorological Research in Australia

RESEARCH in Australia in the fields of meteorology and atmospheric physics has been receiving active attention recently. Present proposals envisage a subdivision of research between the Meteorological Bureau, the University of Melbourne, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The Meteorological

Bureau is concerned with applied meteorology and climatology for public, economic and defence interests, and is carrying out research on problems connected with its practical functions. During the War it has extended its studies to include intensive investigations in areas to the north of the Australian continent. The School of Meteorology at the University of Melbourne provides theoretical post-graduate training in meteorology, and is undertaking research into problems associated with aeronautical meteorology and other problems of a long-range nature referred to it by the Meteorological Bureau.

It is now proposed that the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research shall establish a Section of Meteorological Physics to concentrate on fundamental research into the physics of the atmosphere. The research work of the three organisations will be co-ordinated by a Meteorological Research Consultative Committee. As a first step, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research is appointing an officer to take charge of this new phase of its activities, and it hopes to develop in Australia a research laboratory devoted to meteorological physics.

#### Summer School in Social Biology

THE British Social Hygiene Council is holding a residential summer school in social biology, at Wadham College, Oxford, during August 1-15. The School is being planned to illustrate the scientific approach, through biology, to human life and culture, as well as the ways in which the biological sciences find application in individual and social life. It is designed to appeal to teachers in all types of schools, along with others concerned with education: youth leaders, nurses, welfare workers, people in administrative positions and members of the general public. The main course of lectures will deal with broad aspects of social biology of interest to specialists and laymen alike. The evening lectures will be given by distinguished visiting biologists and social workers, each speaking on work and problems in his own particular field. At the Sunday sessions a special feature will be the discussions on the relation of biological science to ethical and spiritual values.

At the first session each day members will be able to attend either an instructional course in elementary biology, to extend their basic knowledge, or talks and discussions dealing with present-day social and cultural aspects of biology. These alternative courses will be supplemented by tea-time sessions at which speakers will discuss class-room problems of teaching biology and the scope for the biological approach to certain social questions. A series of practical demonstrations, and of visits to scientific institutions, research departments and other places of interest, in and around Oxford, is being arranged. An introductory course in animal dissection will also be offered, if there is sufficient call for it. Social arrangements are also being made. For the whole Summer School, apart from dissections, the inclusive fee will be £14 14s. Further details can be obtained from the British Social Hygiene Council, Tavistock House North, London, W.C.1.

#### Summer School in Health Education

THE Central Council for Health Education will hold one residential summer school in England, this year, at Somerville College, Oxford, during August 14-28 inclusive. The directors of the school will be Miss D. E. M. Gardner, head of the Child Development Department, University of London Institute of Educa-