

The Centenary of Sir Joseph Banks, Bart.

THE commemoration of the centenary of Sir Joseph Banks, Bart., who died on June 19, 1820, was celebrated by the Linnean Society on Thursday last, as mentioned on p. 496 of NATURE for June 17. After the usual formal business, Dr. B. Daydon Jackson read the first communication on "Banks as a Traveller," speaking of his four overseas voyages—first, the visit to Newfoundland in H.M.S. *Niger*, on board which his friend Constantine Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave, was a lieutenant; next, the adventurous voyage of the *Endeavour*, Lieut. Cook commander, when Banks so amply proved his value in many untoward events; third, the voyage to Iceland; and fourth, his trip to Rotterdam in 1773, when he was still eager for an expedition to the North. The second paper, by Dr. A. B. Rendle, was entitled "Banks as a Patron of Science." Banks's life from his return to England in 1771 until its close in 1820 was that of an enthusiastic, liberal, and generally far-sighted patron of science. A friendship began with King George, which steadily increased, and Banks was consulted on important matters of very various kinds. He became botanical adviser to the King in relation to the Royal Gardens at Kew, which developed under Banks's guidance, becoming the repository of plants of economic and ornamental value from all parts of the world. Banks initiated or encouraged voyages of exploration, and kept up an extensive correspondence with men interested in science overseas. His house in Soho Square was the rendezvous of students and men of all classes interested in schemes of philanthropy or science; his magnificent library and herbarium were at the service of other workers, and after his death were bequeathed to the British Museum. For forty-two years he was president of the Royal Society. He was very closely, though indirectly, associated with the origin of the Linnean Society. Mr. James Britten, in the third paper, began by remarking that much of his paper was based upon the daily use of Banksian specimens for nearly half a century in the British Museum. The author showed that the popular belief that Banks left all his botanic work to his secretaries and curators, Solander and Dryander, was a mistaken one, and that Banks displayed great botanic acquirements.

The president remarked that official records of the British Museum testified to the active interest taken by Banks in all matters connected with its advancement, and that keepers and trustees alike referred to him for his advice and decision.

Certain objects closely connected with Banks were exhibited.

South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies.

THE twenty-fifth annual congress of the Union was held at Eastbourne on June 2-6, under the presidency of Sir Edward Brabrook, who in his presidential address dealt with progress in anthropology and economics during the past quarter of a century. In regard to the latter, he expressed the opinion that the war seemed to have dismissed all economic orthodoxy into thin air, with unrestricted paper currency, reckless extravagance, trading by Government, and manipulation of markets, all of which had been borne with patience during war-time, but were intolerable in time of peace. Science had done what it could to provide sound instruction by the issue of standard works.

The second day's business began with a paper by

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Comdr. E. A. Martin on "The Glaciation of the South Downs," in which he endeavoured to show that the chalk hills received their final curving by ice-agency, and attributed much of the "clay-with-flints" deposits and the chalk rubble of the dry valleys to the agency of glaciers, having their rise on the Downs when they were at a greater height, with greater precipitation, and a low snow-line. He had mapped out the blocks of sandstones, ironstones, and sarsens, and concluded that short rivers could not have transported them to where they are now found. He compared the ironstones with similar deposits which have been found at Lenham, on the North Downs, to be of Pliocene age. He referred the rounded contours of the chalk hills to the grinding action of ice, resulting in their appearance now as huge *roches-moutonnées*. Striations were not, as a rule, found, because the rocks were such as would rather crumble and perish under the pressure necessary to produce them. One sarsen at Stanmer was found, however, distinctly to be striated. The author thought that there had been two clear periods of glaciation: one before the deposition of the temperate marine muds at Selsea, at the base of which were the famous Selsea erratics, referable to the glaciation at the close of the Acheulian period, and a later one which gave rise to the Rubble-Drift, after the development of the Mousterian culture. In a brief discussion which followed, the glaciation theory was opposed by Mr. T. Sheppard, of Hull.

Mr. C. C. Fagg read a paper on "First Steps in a Local Regional Survey," in continuation of the efforts which he has made for some years to stimulate the regional survey movement. Prof. Boulger, in the absence through illness of Miss G. Lister, read a paper on "The Eastern Extension of the Lusitanian Flora," with special reference to the locality.

Prof. E. B. Poulton delivered a public lecture on "Mimicry and Migrations of Insects," and this was attended by invitation by numerous boys' and girls' schools in the town. A paper was read by Mr. R. Adkin on "Migrations of Butterflies and Moths in regard to the British Islands." Mr. Adkin dealt with flights of migrating Lepidoptera and movements of larvæ by the agency of the wind, and discussed the question of whether such occurrences are to be considered as chance happenings or as the result of voluntary action on the part of the migrants. Some account was given of observed immigrations on the coast near Eastbourne, and further evidence was asked for. Mr. Adkin showed how the geographical position of the British Islands rendered them singularly suitable for the observation of such phenomena, and suggested the lines of movement by which such immigrants would be likely to reach our coasts. The paper was illustrated by maps and diagrams and by exhibits of the insects referred to.

The matter of the enclosing of so much of the Downs during the last year or two by barbed-wire fences was discussed, and a resolution was carried with much enthusiasm asking that joint steps should be taken by several influential bodies to carry through a scheme for the protection of rights of way over the Downs, and for the acquisition for public use of typical stretches of them.

A large collection of wild flowers was on exhibition during the congress. *Phyteuma spicatum* was said to be growing in large quantities in East Sussex this year, and orchids were found in profusion in and about Beachy Head. Excursions to Pevensy, Alfriston, East Dean, Old Eastbourne, and other places added interest to a very successful congress.

After one of the excursions the party returned to "Hodeslea" to tea. Huxley spent the later years of