

and physics, or for degrees in science—a task which his wide knowledge, his unfailing good nature, his geniality, his ready sympathy, and his infinite capacity for taking pains, fitted him to discharge to the great advantage of many generations of undergraduates. For the last ten years he also held the office of general secretary in the Royal Society of Edinburgh, where the same characteristics found further exercise, along with others which eminently qualified him for editorial work.

In Japan, with pupils such as Nagaoka, Knott's influence as a teacher soon became conspicuous, and has proved enduring. His love of research was infectious. The school of young Japanese seismologists and magneticians, then in its infancy, owed much to his example and encouragement. Along with Tanakadate, he carried out a magnetic survey of "all Japan." His industry was untiring and the habit of research, formed in his student days, never left him. All his scientific work is sound and thorough. His published papers, more than seventy in number, cover a wide range, but the subjects of ferro-magnetism, especially in its relation to strains, and of seismology, continued to engage his main attention. His book on the physics of earthquake phenomena, published in 1908, is an admirable digest of the whole subject, linking up the older with the newer seismology. His last long paper, published by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1919, completed a series in which the theory of earthquake-wave propagation is discussed with much originality.

Probably the best known of Knott's books is his *Biography of Tait* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1911). No other disciple was so fit to undertake the difficult task of writing the life of the master, for on Knott the mantle had most directly fallen, and he, more than any, continued to wear it. Tait himself, in a preface to his collected papers, speaks of Knott as an adept

in quaternions as well as in physics, and adepts in quaternions have always been rare. Knott's grasp of mathematical methods, his intimacy with Tait's work and appreciation of Tait's genius, and above all his affectionate comprehension of an often whimsical personality, inspired him to write what is beyond question an exceptionally adequate and deeply interesting biography. More recently he organised the Napier tercentenary (1914), and edited the memorial volume. Almost his last act was to pass for the press the final sheets of collected papers by the late Dr. John Aitken, F.R.S.

An unselfish, modest, Christian gentleman, whose life was a constant round of unobtrusive service, Knott is mourned by many friends.  
J. A. E.

By the death of Thomas Francis Moore the National Museum, Melbourne, has lost one of the most valued members of its staff. Mr. Moore had filled the position of osteologist at that institution for nearly twenty-two years. His work was of a very high order and universally known. As a link with the past, it may be mentioned that Mr. Moore's father, Mr. T. J. Moore, was for forty years curator of the Liverpool Museum, and from 1865 to 1884 organised and took part in the Liverpool Free Public lectures. Dr. Frederick Moore, of the East India Company's Museum, well known by his work on oriental Lepidoptera, was an uncle of Mr. T. F. Moore.

THE *Chemiker Zeitung* of October 17 reports the death, at the age of sixty-four years, of Prof. Lassar-Cohn, who had occupied the chair of chemistry at Königsberg since 1894. His work was mainly in the fields of organic and technical chemistry, and his textbooks were well known in English translations.

### Current Topics and Events.

THE following is a list of those recommended by the president and council of the Royal Society for election to the council at the anniversary meeting on November 30:—*President*: Sir Charles Sherrington; *Treasurer*: Sir David Prain; *Secretaries*: Mr. W. B. Hardy and Dr. J. H. Jeans; *Foreign Secretary*: Sir Arthur Schuster; *Other members of Council*: Prof. V. H. Blackman, Prof. H. C. H. Carpenter, Prof. T. R. Elliott, Prof. A. Harden, Sir Sidney Harmer, Prof. W. M. Hicks, Prof. H. F. Newall, Prof. G. H. F. Nuttall, Prof. D. Noel Paton, Lord Rayleigh, Prof. O. W. Richardson, Sir Ernest Rutherford, Dr. Alexander Scott, Mr. F. E. Smith, Sir Aubrey Strahan, and Prof. J. T. Wilson.

It is announced in *Science* that Dr. S. W. Stratton, director of the Bureau of Standards at Washington for the past twenty-one years, has been elected president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Stratton was professor of physics and electrical engineering at the University of Illinois and professor of physics at the University of Chicago before his appointment as director of the Bureau of Standards

in 1901; he found the department a small office employing three or four people, and from it he built up the present department with a staff of about 900. Commenting on Dr. Stratton's resignation, Mr. Hoover is reported by the *New York Times* to have said: "The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an educational institution, finds no difficulty in paying a man of Dr. Stratton's calibre three times the salary the government is able to pay him." It appears that it is impossible to live and to provide for old age while at Washington on a government salary, and for this reason it is difficult to induce men of science to undertake responsible national posts.

PROF. A. SMITHELLS' retirement at the end of the present session from the chair of chemistry of the University of Leeds, after thirty-eight years of active work, will be a serious loss to the whole educational world as well as to the narrower sphere of academic life of the University in the progress and development of which he has played so conspicuous and devoted a part. His intention in retiring is to employ part