

1923. This will leave more than 20° of latitude unrepresented between Batavia and Antipolo ($14^{\circ} 36' N.$). Kodaikanal was one of the stations supported by the Indian Survey, which has also closed down observatories at Barrackpore ($22^{\circ} 46' N.$) and Toungoo ($18^{\circ} 56' N.$), thus leaving only two magnetic observatories, Alibag and Dehra Dun, in the whole Indian empire. The fact that, as compared with pre-War times, magnetic observatories have fared worse in India than in Russia seems to afford food for reflection. If Kodaikanal is an unsuitable site, as is rather suggested by remarks in some of the Indian Survey publications, the resuscitation of Trivandrum, memorable for the work of J. A. Broun, would provide a station nearer to the equator than any existing observatory in the northern hemisphere.

Other areas within the British Empire where magnetism is somewhat poorly represented are South Africa and Australia. There was once a magnetic observatory at Cape Town, and a new observatory somewhere else in South Africa has been talked about, but at present the Royal Alfred Observatory in Mauritius

seems to be the only one in that part of the world. Melbourne was once the site of a magnetic observatory, but has long been unsuitable for that purpose. Recently an observatory has been set agoing at Toolangi in Victoria, but that seems the only observatory in Australia, with the exception of Watheroo, which belongs to the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

New Zealand has a magnetic observatory at Christchurch, and with assistance from the Admiralty and the Carnegie Institution is also maintaining what was originally a German observatory at Apia, Samoa. It is scarcely necessary to say, in view of the scarcity of magnetic observatories in or near the Pacific Ocean, that the stoppage of Apia observatory would have been a great misfortune.

The latest observatory of the Carnegie Institution, Huancayo ($12^{\circ} 3' S.$), is in a way unique from its proximity to the magnetic equator. Dip there at present is less than 1° , and its measurement must present unusual features. Huancayo is situated, moreover, in a continent, South America, where additional magnetic observatories are badly wanted.

Obituary.

SIR WILLIAM RIDGEWAY.

WILLIAM RIDGEWAY, a son of the Rev. J. H. Ridgeway, of Ballydermot, King's County, was born in 1853; he had a brilliant career in Trinity College, Dublin, and later at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, graduating as fifth Classic in 1880, and was elected a fellow of his College. In 1883 he was appointed to the chair of Greek in Queen's College, Cork, and while holding that appointment he resided for five months each year in Cambridge. In 1892 he was elected to the Disney professorship of archæology in Cambridge, and shortly afterwards resigned his chair at Cork. He was re-elected a fellow of his College, and had also been Brereton reader in classics since 1907. He was Gifford lecturer in natural religion, University of Aberdeen, in 1909-11; Stokes lecturer in Irish archæology, Dublin, 1909; and Hermione lecturer in art, Dublin, 1911. He was president of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1908-10; of the Anthropological Section of the British Association, 1908; and had been president of the Cambridge Philological, Antiquarian, Classical and Anthropological Societies. He was elected a fellow of the British Academy in 1904, and was a foreign member of various learned societies in Europe. His learning was recognised by other universities, and he had conferred on him Hon. D.Litt. Dublin, 1902; Hon. D.Litt. Manchester, 1906; Hon. LL.D. Aberdeen, 1908; and gained the Sc.D. of Cambridge for his work on the horse. He was knighted in 1919. He wrote numerous contributions to classical, philological, anthropological, zoological and other journals, and the following books: "Origin of Metallic Currency and Weight Standards," 1892; "The Early Age of Greece," 1901; "The Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred Horse," 1905; "The Origin of Tragedy," 1910.

This bare enumeration of the academic distinctions and of the writings of Sir William Ridgeway will serve to show the wide extent of his erudition and the great

range of his interests. These were constantly exhibited when he joined in discussions at classical and scientific societies, in which he usually gave a free rein to his sense of humour, and also to caustic criticism. His strong personality and the definite views he expressed vividly in speech and writing, combined with his love of controversy, sometimes strained the forbearance of many friends, even occasionally to the breaking point. He was a man of pronounced likes and dislikes, and it was often a moot point whether he was not as dangerous to the causes he espoused and to his friends as to his enemies, for he was liable through friendly enthusiasm to overstate the case at issue. He entered wholeheartedly into a fray, whether it was Irish education, the Irish and English Anglican Church, or University politics, as those can testify who remember the discussions on the degrees for women and on compulsory Greek in the University of Cambridge.

Sir William was emphatically a driving force in the University, and spared no pains in furthering the well-being of the institutions to which he belonged, to take but two examples: the Cambridge Antiquarian Society and the Museum of Archæology and Ethnology. It was due to his energy that a lectureship in ethnology was instituted, and again largely to him that nine years later it was converted into a readership; in this and other ways he was instrumental in founding the Cambridge School of Anthropology. He very early recognised the value of ethnology in elucidating obscure points in classics and archæology; in some respects he was a pioneer in these comparative studies, and he delighted to recall how his heterodox views later gained acceptance from more conservative scholars.

Sir William stimulated very many students, naturally mainly in classical archæology, of whom a considerable proportion have gained great eminence, and he was careful to keep in frequent correspondence with them; but he also had a large number of correspondents throughout the world on an amazing variety of

subjects, from Asiatic ritual dances to currency and zebras.

Those who were privileged to see Sir William's family life gained another view of this very remarkable man. His love for his wife was as apparent as it was deserved, for Lady Ridgeway devoted her life to her brilliant husband, and no one will ever know what he owed to her. She was his prop for very many years as his eyesight increasingly failed, and she dispensed gracious hospitality to his friends in their charming home at Fen Ditton. Her sudden death at the end of May was a terrible blow, and though he gallantly tried to overcome his desolation and to take up the threads of his old life, he was a broken man until death mercifully took him in his sleep during the night of

August 11: a peaceful ending for a strenuous and militant life.
A. C. HADDON.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Mr. William Fawcett, lately Director of Public Gardens and Plantations, Jamaica, on August 14, aged seventy-five years.

Prof. Robert Gnehm, professor of technical chemistry, and afterwards director of the Technical High School, Zurich, who was known for his investigations on dyeing processes and dyestuffs, aged seventy-four years.

Dr. J. F. Hall-Edwards, president of the British Electro-Therapeutic Society, and a pioneer in the field of medical radiology, on August 15, aged sixty-seven years.

News and Views.

THE meeting of the British Association at Oxford which ended on August 11 has been memorable in many ways; and not least for the specially interesting character of the proceedings at the concluding gathering held at the Examination Schools. The message received from the Prince of Wales as president summed up in felicitous language the aims and prospects of the cause of science, the advancement of which it is the object of the Association to promote. The message also conveyed, in graceful terms, the president's appreciation of, and thanks for, the efforts made by all concerned to render the Oxford meeting of 1926 one of the most successful in the records of the Association. The reply read by Sir Oliver Lodge as chairman gave due expression to the gratitude felt by the members assembled at Oxford for the keen personal interest and sympathy shown by the Prince in the work of the Association, notably in his inaugural address.

The speech delivered by Sir Oliver Lodge bore eloquent testimony to the world-wide charm exercised by Oxford over all who can be touched by the long history of western civilisation and culture. The well-known eulogy by Matthew Arnold, marked by graceful fancy and poetic feeling, and not without a light suggestion of penetrating humour, came with especial force and acceptance from one so capable of giving it its full effect as Sir Oliver Lodge. The significance of the presence of guests from overseas and from foreign countries had been emphasised by the Prince in his message, and was driven further home by the chairman of the meeting. The speeches of Prof. M'Murich and Prof. Osborn, the latter of which concluded the meeting, showed that they too, as visitors and guests from overseas and abroad, fully appreciated the claim of science for international co-operation and fellowship. The final meeting at the schools was especially well attended, and formed an excellent conclusion to a very successful gathering.

AMONG several interesting papers presented to the Chemistry Section of the British Association at Oxford was a contribution by Mr. J. J. Manley on "The

Union of Mercury and Helium." Judging by a lengthy report of Mr. Manley's paper in the *Times* for August 11, the author does not appear to have carried his investigations beyond the stage described in his letter to *NATURE* of April 24 last, except that he now believes that only one helide— HgHe —is formed, whereas in the letter he stated that he had obtained experimental evidence of the existence of two— HgHe_{10} and HgHe . The evidence for union appears to be based upon the disappearance of free helium when it is submitted to the action of the electric glow discharge in contact with purified mercury, and upon a slight increase in refractive index as the action proceeds. The presumed compound is apparently decomposed by heat, so that its composition could be deduced from the difference in weight of 'uncombined' mercury before and after the experiment. As this difference is exceedingly small—of the order of 236 millionths of a gram—it is clear that Mr. Manley is encountering very great experimental difficulties; and bearing in mind the somewhat similar work of Miethe and Stammreich on the alleged transmutation of mercury into gold (*NATURE*, May 29, 1926), it is obvious that further investigation is required to dissipate or confirm the doubts that are held concerning the author's conclusions. Should those doubts be dissipated, Mr. Manley's work will constitute a discovery of very great importance.

IN the issue of the *Times* referred to, a leader-writer refers to Mr. Manley's contribution as a "startling announcement," as if it were novel, but actually the claim was first announced by Mr. Manley in these columns more than twenty months ago (*NATURE*, December 13, 1924). It is perhaps asking too much to expect a leader-writer, even in the *Times*, to be conversant with all that appears in our correspondence columns, but the incident directs attention once more to the need of adequate scientific representation on the staffs of our leading newspapers, and it also testifies to the value of the work done by the British Association in affording opportunity for lay writers to proclaim from the house-tops matters