

The Ross Institute and Hospital for Tropical Diseases.

THE twenty-fifth anniversary in 1923 of Sir Ronald Ross's epoch-making discovery of the transmission of human malaria through the bite of anopheline mosquitoes was the occasion of an appeal for the foundation of an institute for research upon, and for the treatment of, tropical diseases which should serve as a lasting monument to Ross's achievement.

As a result of this appeal, initiated by Sir William Simpson and Sir Aldo Castellani and supported by many influential signatories in all parts of the world, funds were contributed by Indian princes, colonial governments and municipalities, city companies, rubber, tea, oil, and other trading companies, and private individuals, a house and grounds were acquired on Putney Heath, London, and the building was adapted partly as a hospital for the treatment of patients suffering from tropical diseases and partly as laboratories for research. This constitutes the present Ross Institute and Hospital for Tropical Diseases, of which Her Grace the Duchess of Portland is president.

The Institute is administered by a council of which Sir Charles Campbell McLeod is chairman and Major Lockwood Stevens, secretary. The staff includes Sir Ronald Ross himself as director-in-chief; Sir William Simpson, director of tropical hygiene; and Sir Aldo Castellani, medical director, with Sir Malcolm Watson in charge of the Malaria Department. The annual Report for 1930, recently issued, surveys at some length the activities and research work of the Institute. An increased number of patients were treated in the hospital during the year, the total number being 85.

Sir Ronald Ross has continued to write upon malaria and its control, Sir William Simpson is investigating the longevity of the plague and other bacteria, and Sir Aldo Castellani has published several papers on minor and other ailments of the tropics and upon fungi which attack the skin. Dr. Shaw-Mackenzie is continuing his studies of the blood-changes that occur in cancer and on the diagnosis by blood-tests and treatment of this disease. In the malaria laboratory, observations have been made on the influence of cold upon the larvae of the British tree-breeding anopheline, *A. plumbeus*, showing that they hibernate and resist even freezing in the water in the tree-holes. A lengthy survey is given of the activities of the Anti-Malaria Advisory Committee of the Institute in the control of mosquitoes and malaria abroad; this work was referred to in NATURE of Jan. 31, p. 173.

Courses of instruction have been given to planters and others interested in the control of malaria. Unfortunately, the income for the year shows a decrease of £1500, partially counterbalanced by a reduction in expenditure of £628 on 1929. The financial position of the Ross Institute is unsatisfactory, as at present the Institute is entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions, and an appeal is made for funds to create an endowment fund.

In a series of appendices, the malaria policy of the Ross Institute is outlined and the results of malaria-preventive measures summarised. Mr. Jackson Clarke, a veteran worker in cancer research, is arranging his collection of slides and photographs for exhibition in the laboratories.

Bi-Centenary of the Foundation of the Royal Dublin Society.

THE bi-centenary of the Royal Dublin Society will be celebrated in Dublin on June 23-26. The history of the Society is in many respects remarkable. As regards the scope of its activities it is probably unique. The first meeting of the Society was held on June 25, 1731, in the rooms of the Philosophical Society in Trinity College, Dublin. The earliest definition of its objects is expressed as follows:

"It was proposed and unanimously agreed unto, to form a Society, by the name of the Dublin Society, for improving Husbandry, Manufactures and other useful arts."

A few days later, on July 1, at the second meeting, it was agreed that the words "and sciences" should be added after "arts" in the title of the Society.

Among its earliest members the name of Thomas Prior appears. He had graduated in Trinity College, Dublin, in 1703. He acted as secretary of the young Society for twenty years, and is by many regarded as its founder. Several distinguished names appear as early members: among others, that of Dr. John Madden, whose son, Samuel Madden, D.D., became a member in 1733 and proved to be one of its most loyal, able, and generous supporters. He became known as 'Premium Madden' because of his wise policy of offering premiums for methods of tillage, etc. He was influential in obtaining for the young Society its first charter.

Among the earliest members many other noteworthy names appear, including that of Sir Thomas Molyneux, a fellow of the Royal Society, who was a friend of Robert Boyle, of Sir William Petty, of Newton, Evelyn, Dryden, and Locke. Molyneux's scientific interests were wide; he first gave a rational account of the origin of the Giants' Causeway, and wrote a

scientific report on the Irish elk. In general, however, matters of a practical character engaged the attention of the young Society: such as Prior's paper on "A New Method of Draining Marshy and Boggy Lands".

The foundation of local branch societies in the principal towns and cities of Ireland, which should establish communication with the Dublin Society, was promoted. There is no doubt as to the practical and directly beneficent character of the work of the young Society, and, at the same time, of its interest in the promotion of applied and general science.

This was in the days of that brilliant but unhappy genius, Jonathan Swift. A very extraordinary, anonymous book, printed in Dublin in 1753, and written "By a Friend to the Peace and Prosperity of Ireland", is in the possession of the present writer. It purports to be "A Dialogue between Dean Swift and Thos. Prior, Esq., in the Isles of St. Patrick's Church, Dublin, Oct. 9, 1753". The shades of the two defunct speakers, rising at midnight from the grave, discuss the economic conditions of Ireland and how best they can be improved. The constructive ambitions of Prior are in general exposed to the caustic satire and pessimism of the Dean. But in the end both agree on the necessity of reforms. The dialogue, covering 134 pages, is brilliant throughout.

In the first century of the Society's existence, systematic works, not only of economic and practical nature, but also in many cases of considerable scientific interest, were published by the Society. The now well-known 'Spring Shows' of the Society were inaugurated in 1831, and the stated meetings of the scientific members of the Society began some three years later.

It has been said that most of the good which has been done for Ireland has been done by this great

institution. To its initiative and labours Dublin owes its beautiful Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin; its Museum of Art and Natural Science; its National Gallery and School of Art; its National Library; and its College of Science now amalgamated with the National University. The Irish Fishery Department is largely due to its initiative and early support. Its great agricultural shows and horse shows are known over the world.

More recently, the Irish Radium Institute came into existence as one branch of the Society's beneficent work. Its fine pioneer work in advancing radiotherapy, mainly due to the late Dr. Walter Stevenson, is widely known. The functions of this Institute extend to all parts of Ireland.

The support of science, pure and applied, in all its branches has been one of the Society's principal functions in recent years. Its *Transactions* and *Proceedings* include some of the most important writings of Fitzgerald, Stoney, Preston, Trouton, among others. The Society supports a liberal fund for the prosecution of research by the purchase of scientific instruments which are supplied on loan to the investigator, or by money grants when a hopeful investigation is involved. In its great hall, seating 1600 persons, scientific lectures suited to a youthful audience or, again, to an audience of adults are delivered annually by recognised scientific authorities. Still more advanced lectures and demonstrations are delivered periodically in a smaller apartment.

From remote times the Society has promoted the fine arts, as already mentioned; and offers to young artists annually a valuable prize upon the result of competitive work. The prize is of sufficient value to enable the winner to go abroad for the study of art, if he so desires. Nor has the cultivation of music been neglected. Throughout each session eminent musicians perform for the benefit of the members and of the general public.

The membership of the Society to-day numbers 9000, and a long waiting list exists. The great educational value of its membership is recognised by all.

In the celebration of its two-hundredth birthday, every effort will be made to recall its earlier history, as well as to show by contrast the advance between then and now. Early scientific instruments of historic value will be shown. Recent instruments for research devised by members of the Society will be on view. Works of art from Irish painters or sculptors which have arisen out of the Art School long ago established by the Society will be brought together. A period ball on June 26 will close the celebrations. In this, efforts to reproduce the costumes of the past will be encouraged.

June 23 is the opening day. A conversazione, and reception by the president, will be held on the evening of that day.

The North Sea Earthquake.

LATER reports on the North Sea earthquake of June 7 add little, if anything, to our knowledge of its distribution. Several of the cracks in the Chapter House of Lincoln Cathedral were found to be widened, and the shock was felt so far to the south as Paris. The former city lies within the area of slight damage as previously traced, the latter within the boundary of the disturbed area. The course of that boundary towards the east and north remains uncertain, in the absence of records from western Germany and Denmark.

An unusual feature of the earthquake is the great extent of the sound-area. In Great Britain, the sound was heard at several places not more than fifty

miles within the boundary of the disturbed area. The double nature of the shock was also observed over a wide area, and even at places so near the boundary as Elgin and Bristol.

It is remarkable that some of the earthquakes most widely felt in Britain should be of submarine origin. The earthquake of 1852—the only one felt in all four divisions of the British Isles—disturbed an area of not less than 56,000 sq. miles. The exact position of the epicentre is unknown, but it was probably submarine and not far from the coast of Ireland. The shock so generally felt in eastern Scotland four years ago was connected with a centre to the west of the Norwegian coast. A centre lying a few miles east of Jersey has been responsible for several shocks felt over the south of England and even in London. The disturbed areas of the Jersey earthquakes of 1878 and 1889 contained about 68,000 sq. miles, while that of the earthquake of 1926 cannot have been much less.

So far as we know, the focus of the recent North Sea earthquake has not been in action for several centuries. The injury to the Chapter House at Lincoln suggests, however, that a strong earthquake in the year 1185 may have been connected with the same centre. The shock is briefly described in several monastic and other chronicles. According to Holinshed ("Chronicles", vol. 2, pp. 188-189), "On the mondaie in the weeke before Easter, chanced a sore earthquake through all the parts of this land, such a one as the like had not beene heard of in England sithens the beginning of the world. For stones that laie couched fast in the earth, were remoued out of their places, stone houses were overthrowne, and the great church of Lincolne was rent from the top downwards."

C. DAVISON.

University and Educational Intelligence.

CAMBRIDGE.—Dr. S. Goldstein, of St. John's College, and Mr. J. M. Whittaker, of Pembroke College, have been appointed University lecturers in the Faculty of Mathematics.

Dr. N. J. J. M. Needham, of Gonville and Caius College, has been reappointed University demonstrator in biochemistry.

The Appointments Committee of the Faculty of Biology 'B' invite candidates for the post of University demonstrator in experimental psychology to send in their names to Prof. Bartlett (at the Psychological Laboratory), together with such evidence of their qualifications as they think fit, not later than Oct. 1, 1931. An appointment will be made early in the Michaelmas Term 1931. The salary of the demonstrator will be £160 per annum.

The Benn W. Levy research studentship in biochemistry is vacant. Applications for its tenure should be addressed to Sir F. G. Hopkins at the School of Biochemistry, before July 1.

The title of Professor Emeritus has been conferred on Sir R. H. Biffen upon his retirement from the professorship of agricultural botany.

The General Board has been authorised to re-appoint Sir Horace Lamb, of Trinity College, to the Rayleigh lectureship in mathematics.

The Vice-Chancellor; Prof. Seward, Master of Downing College; T. Knox-Shaw, of Sidney Sussex; Prof. Debenham, C. F. Cooper, of Trinity Hall; Sir E. H. Young, of Trinity College; J. M. Wordie, of St. John's College; and R. E. Priestley, of Clare College, have been appointed a Syndicate to prepare a scheme for the erection of a building for the Scott Polar Research Institute.

Prof. G. H. Hardy, Savilian professor of geometry