

News and Views

The Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bt., K.T., F.R.S.

ALL who love Scotland, whatever may be the grounds of their affection, will join in the tribute of congratulation and wishes of good will to Sir Herbert Eustace Maxwell of Monreith on the celebration of his ninetieth birthday on January 8. He has shown himself a most loyal son of a race noted for pride in its motherland; and as much as any writer since the days of Sir Walter Scott, he has successfully interpreted to his fellow-countrymen, as well as to the southerner, the charm, never too obvious, of the Scottish countryside in all its variety, and the romance of the chequered and turbulent course of Scottish history. Here he has ranged from the making of Scotland and the high adventure of the Bruce to the lowly annals of the hamlet, obscurely and imperfectly preserved in local tradition and place-names. His numerous studies of national and local history, the latter especially in his own Galloway, deserve well of Scottish students; but archæologist and historian alike are no less indebted to him for his activities as president of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and as chairman of the Royal Commission on Scottish Historical Monuments in practical affairs relating to Scottish history and archæology. Sir Herbert's literary achievement has covered a wide field—from romance and fiction, history and biography, including a life of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith and a survey of the first sixty years of Queen Victoria's rule, to "British Freshwater Fishes"; but he is most at home when he seeks to convey the interest and charm of the birds and beasts of his own countryside, the trees of the woodlands and the flowers of a Scottish garden. Here, indeed, *nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*.

Prof. D'Arcy W. Thompson, C.B., F.R.S.

ON December 23, Prof. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson completed the fiftieth year of his tenure of a professorial chair; for he was appointed professor of biology in the newly founded University College of Dundee in 1884. Fresh from the biological renaissance in Cambridge under Michael Foster and Frank Balfour, the young professor found in Dundee every possible kind of discouragement, scanty endowment, mean and unsuitable buildings—and the depressing atmosphere of an industrial city. The title of his chair was soon changed to that of zoology, and in the closing years of the century the incorporation of the College in the University of St. Andrews, and the establishment of a medical school, brought a small increase in the number of his students. In 1917, on the retirement of his senior colleague, Prof. W. C. M'Intosh, D'Arcy Thompson was transferred to the chair of natural history, which he still occupies, in the United College at St. Andrews. Fortunately, the time has not yet come to sum up or to pass judgment upon D'Arcy Thompson's achievements. His innumerable friends, however, and his pupils—none too numerous, alas!—will join with us in congratulating him on the jubilee of his

professorship. Few men of our time have been so much at home in both the fields of the old and the newer learning. He is, we believe, the only holder of a chair of science who has been president of the Classical Association, and there must be many among those that have passed through his class-room, who found in an elementary course of lectures on zoology at least the beginnings of a liberal education.

A National Institute of Science for India

THE Calcutta correspondent of *The Times* reports on January 7 that:—"The Governor of Bengal has inaugurated a National Institute of the Sciences of India, of which the object is to promote scientific knowledge in India. The institute will act through national committees, and will serve as a national research council for the undertaking of work of national and international importance required by the public and the Government. Dr. L. L. Fermor, Director of the Geological Survey of India, is the first president." From this report it would seem that the new body is to combine the characteristics of a National Academy of Sciences and a National Research Council, but it is difficult without further details to know how it is related to existing organisations in India.

It may be remembered that in 1930 an Academy of Sciences was formed in the United Provinces, with its seat at Allahabad. Later, there was a movement for the establishment of an Indian Academy of Sciences through the development or affiliation of the U.P. Academy or by the formation of a new body. It was suggested that the ancient Asiatic Society of Bengal might appropriately become such an All-India institution, and with the view of considering the whole matter a committee was appointed by the Indian Science Congress to prepare a report. Without awaiting the recommendations of this Committee, Sir C. V. Raman, now director of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, himself registered the title of "The Indian Academy of Sciences", and the *Proceedings* of this Academy, similar in format to those of the Royal Society of London, began publication in July last. There are thus now two academies of sciences in India—one in Allahabad and the other in Bangalore, that is, in north and south India respectively. There is plenty of room in the country for these two academies, but objections can be raised to either of them assuming the sole right to use the prefix "Indian"; and it is not surprising, therefore, that Sir C. V. Raman's action has caused a storm of protest. No doubt the claims of different societies and places in India to recognition as centres of publication for the whole country have been considered by the committee of the Indian Science Congress. We await with interest the recommendations of the committee and trust that they will assist in removing the confusion which at present exists and will promote unity of purpose among scientific workers in all parts of the country.