

PROF. J. MACMILLAN BROWN

WE regret to record the death of Prof. J. Macmillan Brown, chancellor of the University of New Zealand, and well known as an authority on the peoples of the Pacific, which took place at the age of eighty-nine years, at Wellington, N.Z., on January 18.

John Macmillan Brown was born at Irvine, Scotland, in 1846, the son of Mr. James Brown, shipmaster, and was educated at the Irvine Academy, the University of Glasgow, and Balliol College, Oxford, of which he was an exhibitioner. In 1874, on the establishment of Canterbury University College, he went to New Zealand to take up the appointment of professor of classics, and later became professor of English literature. In 1877 he became a member of the Senate of his University, and in 1923 was elected chancellor, an appointment which he held until his death.

Macmillan Brown was best known in England for his work on the problems of the Pacific, and more particularly for his somewhat speculative theories on the origin of the Polynesians and of the remarkable artistic products of Easter Island. His views were set forth in considerable detail and fully argued in his books "Maori and Polynesian", "The Riddle of the Pacific" (1924), and "Peoples and Problems of the Pacific" (1927). In the view put forward in the "Riddle of the Pacific" he argued that the famous statues of Easter Island are the product of workers on what was a mausoleum for a circle of islands, which have since disappeared owing to volcanic action. His theories of the peopling of the Pacific, which proved stimulating, if not entirely acceptable, brought the Polynesians as a Caucasian element from Asia, a primeval form of Indo-European. Whatever may be the ultimate verdict on his philological and ethnological theories, they undoubtedly had a stimulating effect in promoting the study of the peoples of the Pacific in New Zealand.

MR. FRANCIS J. BLIGHT

OLD scientific friends of Mr. Francis J. Blight will learn with much regret of his death at the age of seventy-seven years, on January 27 at his home at Mill Hill. Previously to 1927 he had been closely associated with Messrs. Charles Griffin and Co., Ltd., the well-known publishers of technical scientific books, and since 1899, when Miss E. E. Griffin died, he had been chairman and managing director of the firm, only retiring in 1927 in consequence of rearrangements following on the death of Miss Helen Griffin.

In early life, Blight, whose father and grandfather had been booksellers and stationers, had been for some years engaged in office work connected with iron and steel works, railway and other architecture, map-making, etc. He had thus become an expert draughtsman, with a wide knowledge of technical processes of many different kinds. In 1886 he became assistant manager to Messrs. J. and A. Churchill, the medical publishers, and in 1894 manager for Messrs. Griffin, then under the able chairmanship of

Miss E. E. Griffin. Quickly realising the wide need for technical scientific books of all kinds, he developed this side of the firm's business with extraordinary energy and success, bringing out textbook after textbook which had large sales.

It was to a very great extent Blight's own personality that led to these books being written. He not only suggested them in many cases to men who, he saw, were likely to write them well, but also in their actual production was extremely helpful, particularly perhaps as regards the illustrations. It was an extraordinary stimulus and encouragement to meet him, as the writer of this short notice often did, in the well-known room at Exeter Street which was pervaded by his genial presence.

In 1920 a volume was published in celebration of the centenary of the Griffin firm, which had originated early last century at Glasgow. This volume contains sections dealing with the more recent publications of the firm in scientific technology, and written by Prof. Barnett, Sir T. Hudson Beare, Sir W. S. Abell, Prof. W. Gowland, Prof. Henry Louis, and other well-known authors. In a foreword to the volume, Lord Moulton stresses the national importance of technological publishing, and remarks that to Mr. Blight "the exceptional prosperity of the Firm, and its services to the country during the late war, must be primarily ascribed".

Only brief mention can be made here of another side of Blight's life. He was a keen supporter of the Baptist Church, and particularly of its charitable activities with respect to children and young persons. He also strongly supported all that has been done in this direction by State action and municipal activity. He was a man of simple character, in which love of his fellow-men was never overshadowed by either business or scientific interests. J. S. H.

MRS. JANE LONGSTAFF, who died on January 19, aged seventy-nine years, contributed important papers on Palaeozoic gastropod shells to the *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society*. She was the widow of Dr. G. B. Longstaff, a well-known entomologist, with whom she shared a wide interest in natural history. She was a fellow of the Linnean and Geological Societies, and was for some time a member of council of the Palaeontographical Society. Her early writings were published under her maiden name of Jane Donald, and the value of her researches was acknowledged so long ago as 1898, when the Geological Society awarded her its Murchison Fund.

WE regret to announce the following deaths :

Mr. J. H. Benyon, Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire and chancellor of the University of Reading, a leading figure in agriculture and stock-breeding, on February 14, aged eighty-five years.

Prof. Bohuslav Brauner, lately professor of chemistry in the Charles' University, Prague, sometime Berkeley fellow of Owens College, Manchester, on February 15, aged eighty years.