

## News and Views

Dr. Arnold Berliner and *Die Naturwissenschaften*

WE much regret to learn that on August 13 Dr. Arnold Berliner was removed from the editorship of *Die Naturwissenschaften*, obviously in consequence of non-Aryan policy. This well-known scientific weekly, which in its aims and features has much in common with NATURE, was founded twenty-three years ago by Dr. Berliner, who has been the editor ever since and has devoted his whole activities to the journal, which has a high standard and under his guidance has become the recognised organ for expounding to German scientific readers subjects of interest and importance. A personal friend of Dr. Berliner writes: "When addressing the editor on his seventieth birthday in the inaugurating page of a festival issue, Albert Einstein said, 'His journal cannot be imagined as absent from the scientific life of our time'. Extremely small, indeed, is the number of journals which fulfil the task of uniting by a strong bond the separated and highly specialised work of the leading students in the various domains of science. The editor's important rôle and his active contribution to the progress of research, in conducting a periodical of this kind, are of a different order of magnitude from that of an ordinary 'Fachzeitschrift'. In order to cope with his task, he is obliged to exert very definite leadership on a body of prominent men, everyone of whom is liable to see things distorted from the point of view marked by his own interests and achievements. The editor is the one who has to survey the broad stream of scientific development, to select which subject-matters are suitable for presenting to his readers, to have intimate knowledge of the abilities (scientific and otherwise) of his contributors and, finally, after deciding upon the best writer upon a particular subject, to coax him into fulfilling towards his colleagues a duty of which sometimes neither he nor they are aware and to which the man himself often feels little inclination. It would need a large volume (and, maybe, more than one) to embody only those first-class essays which would never have been written, had it not been for the impossibility of resisting our dear and esteemed friend's gentle command".

Centenary of Darwin's visit to the Galapagos Archipelago

ON September 16, 1835, in the course of the voyage of the *Beagle*, a call was made at the islands of the Galapagos archipelago in the Pacific. This visit was one of the most momentous incidents in the life of Charles Darwin, who was on board the ship as naturalist, for the observations which he was enabled to make gave that orientation to his thoughts which ultimately led him to formulate his theory of the evolution of species. He records in his diary: "The natural history of these islands is eminently curious and well deserves attention. Most of the organic productions are aboriginal creations, found nowhere

else; there is even a difference between the inhabitants of the different islands; yet all show a marked relationship with those of America, though separated from that continent by an open space of ocean between 500 and 600 miles in width. The archipelago is a little world within itself, or rather a satellite attached to America, whence it has derived a few stray colonists and has received the general character of its indigenous productions. Considering the small size of these islands, we feel the more astonished at the number of their aboriginal beings, and at their confined range. Seeing every height crowned with its crater, and the boundaries of most of the lava-streams still distinct, we are led to believe that within a period geologically recent the unbroken ocean was here spread out. Hence both in space and time, we seem to be brought somewhat near to that great fact—that mystery of mysteries—the first appearance of new beings on this earth."

Galapagos Exhibition at the Natural History Museum

To commemorate Darwin's visit to the Galapagos archipelago, a selection of the more characteristic forms of the reptiles and the birds, which were the elements of the fauna that especially claimed Darwin's attention, is exhibited in the Reptile Gallery of the British Museum (Natural History), South Kensington; some of the specimens, indeed, were collected by Darwin himself. Series of mocking-thrushes (*Nesomimus*) and finches (*Geospiza*) are arranged to show the variations in structure and distribution which are described in the "Journal of Researches" and which have puzzled ornithologists ever since. The characteristic giant tortoises, and marine and terrestrial iguanas are also shown, and attention is directed to the destruction of the fauna during the past century and to the imminent danger of its disappearance owing to the introduction and uncontrolled spread of predatory domestic animals.

Darwin and H.M.S. *Beagle*

THE president of the British Association, Prof. W. W. Watts, has received from H.M.S. *Beagle* a cablegram, recalling the centenary of Darwin's landing from the former *Beagle* on the Galapagos Islands. This important event in the history of biological science was duly noticed at the recent meeting of the Association in Norwich. (See NATURE of September 14, p. 426.) The cable pays tribute to "our most distinguished passenger", and adds that "the present *Beagle* salutes the British Association, the trustees of science". An appreciative acknowledgment, wishing good luck to the present *Beagle*, has been returned.

Bicentenary of James Keir, F.R.S.

ON September 29 occurs the bicentenary of the birth of James Keir, an able chemist and the friend