

## Obituary Notices

### Mr. Richard Inwards

SOMETIME near the beginning of the present century a distinguished Continental meteorologist remarked that in England meteorologists were long-lived. It was perhaps the example of the Meteorological Council of that time that was in the mind of the speaker. If the remark had been printed in time it might have been included in the well-known book on "Weather Lore" by Richard Inwards, who died on September 30, at the age of ninety-seven, after seventy-six years of fellowship of the Royal Astronomical Society and seventy-five of the Royal Meteorological Society, including therein a considerable period of 'occlusion' at his residence in Croft-down Road, Highgate, accentuated by failing eyesight.

Mr. Inwards was born at Houghton Regis, not far from Dunstable, on April 22, 1840, the son of Mr. Jabez Inwards, and was educated at Soulbury, about ten miles away. In some way not apparent in the available records his education led to mining as a professional career. His interest in science is obvious from the first. He joined the Royal Astronomical Society at the age of twenty-one and the Royal Meteorological Society at twenty-two, when the latter Society was closely associated with the Institution of Civil Engineers and held its meetings in their room. According to "Who's Who", he managed mines in Bolivia and in Spain, and he reported upon mining enterprises in Norway, Austria, South America, Mexico, Spain, Portugal and England. His recreations were mechanical and microscopical.

When Mr. Inwards joined the Royal Meteorological Society, founded in 1850, it was engaged in organizing and collecting weather observations from volunteer observers in England, represented from 1881 onwards by an annual volume of the "Meteorological Record", while the Scottish Society, with Sir Arthur Mitchell, T. Stevenson (of the Screen) and A. Buchan, were discharging similar duty for Scotland. G. J. Symons was developing the British Rainfall Organization, Kew Observatory was held by the British Association, and the Meteorological Department of the Board of Trade under FitzRoy was organizing, collecting and co-ordinating observations from the sea.

In 1900 the Society had ninety-three stations of the second or third order, and among the names of observers we find E. Mawley at Berkhamsted, Sir J. W. Moore at Dublin, E. Kitto at Falmouth, H. Mellish at Hodsock, Sir Lothian Bell at Rounton, J. Baxendell at Southport, R. Bentley at Slough, F. Campbell Bayard at Wallington. Inwards's name does not appear, though he had already "passed the chair" of the Society in 1894 and 1895, with addresses on "Weather Fallacies" and "Meteorological Observations". He had been on the Council since 1884 and was treasurer in 1900, when Theodore Williams had passed up to be president on the death of G. J. Symons. He was joint editor of the *Quarterly Journal*

for about twenty years and contributed three papers ("The Metric System in Meteorology", "On Some Phenomena of the Upper Air", and "Turner's Representations of Lightning"). He also wrote "On an Instrument for Drawing Parabolic Curves" (*Phil. Mag.*, 1892) and "The Temple of the Andes", 1884. In 1911 he edited the "Life and Work of W. F. Stanley", the instrument maker.

Inwards is specially remembered for his book on "Weather Lore" published first in 1869, with a third edition in 1898. So it would appear that while helping his colleagues to collect and arrange observations from British localities he was himself engaged in collecting notes about the weather and its ways from the literature of the ancients and the moderns, ranging from Hesiod and Theophrastus to *Notes and Queries*. It is a wonderful collection of the weather wisdom of more than two thousand years of common experience, 206 pages displaying perhaps three thousand spontaneous inferences.

In respect of its arrangement this book is perhaps typical of the meteorological practice of the time and has something to do with the final sentence of Mr. Inwards's introduction to "Weather Lore" that "meteorology itself especially as regards English weather is very far from having reached the phase of an exact science". In the "Meteorological Record," as elsewhere, we find separate columns for the several items observed, and the page is so brimful of observations that one is reminded of a supersaturated solution which will develop into beautiful crystals if only an efficient nucleus can be suggested. So in "Weather Lore" we find remarks about weather collected and arranged in groups related to times and seasons, sun, moon and stars, wind, clouds, mists, and so on, while those who were dealing with observations of instruments were formulating their theory round the idea of the cyclonic depression, as they do now on the idea of fronts. In "Weather Lore" the grouping under the chosen headings is rigorous, regardless of latitude or chronology (outside the limits of the solar year) and generally regardless of orographic features. The reader may be pardoned for wondering whether some day a meteorological Kepler may co-ordinate the facts which are disclosed and formulate the insight into Nature which they carry.

### Prof. de Burgh Birch, C.B.

WE regret to record the death, which occurred on September 18 at the age of eighty-five years, of Prof. de Burgh Birch, emeritus professor of physiology in the University of Leeds. Prof. Birch, who was born on May 18, 1852, received his medical training at Bristol and graduated at Edinburgh.

After three years as assistant to the professor of the Institutes of Medicine at Edinburgh, Birch went in 1883 to Leeds as the first full-time professor in