

News and Views

Sir D'Arcy Thompson, C.B., F.R.S.

AT the anniversary meeting of the Linnean Society held on May 24, the Linnean Gold Medal was presented to Sir D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson. In handing the medal to him, Dr. J. Ramsbottom, the president, said: "Since its foundation, the Linnean Society, while maintaining the traditions associated with the great Swedish naturalist whose name it bears, has always welcomed to its fellowship the disciples of the newer schools whose studies of the organic world have led them into fields of knowledge Linnæus never knew. It seemed to our Council, therefore, especially fitting that on this, our one hundred and fiftieth anniversary meeting, the highest honour in our gift should be conferred on a naturalist who, more than any other of our time, has shown himself to be at home in both the fields of the old and of the newer learning. The founders of our Society were, most of them, classical scholars as well as men of science, and we can well imagine Bishop Goodenough and Sir James Edward Smith exchanging snuff-boxes while they discussed and approved the ripe scholarship of your 'Glossary of Greek Birds' and your translation of Aristotle's 'Historia Animalium'. But, if these works are in the eighteenth century tradition, your 'Growth and Form' is no less distinctively in that of the twentieth. Published in war-time, it was one of the first scientific books some of us read when we came back to civil and scientific life in 1919. It is already something of a classic on the shelves of the younger biologists of the experimental school, and we turn to it again and again, not only for information but for inspiration and delight. In selecting you, sir, as the recipient of the Linnean medal, we have no doubt that our choice is one that would have pleased Linnæus himself."

Cases of the Linnæan Collections

DURING the Great War, the herbarium formed by Linnæus and now in the possession of the Linnean Society of London, was removed from the three wooden cases which had contained it since the time of Linnæus and placed for greater safety in steel cabinets. The Council of the Society recently decided that the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Society would be a fitting occasion for returning two of the cases to their original home by presenting one to the Swedish Linnean Society and one to the Linnæus Museum at Hammarby. At the anniversary meeting of May 24, the keys of the cases were handed by the president to Prof. Robert Fries, president of the Swedish Linnean Society. Prof. Fries, in expressing thanks for the gift, said that all Swedish naturalists are grateful to the Linnean Society of London for the great care it has always taken of the priceless treasures in its custody.

Prof. R. H. Fowler, F.R.S.

THE Lord President of the Council has appointed Prof. R. H. Fowler to be director of the National Physical Laboratory with effect as from October 1 next, in succession to Dr. W. H. Bragg, who has been elected to the Cavendish professorship of experimental physics in the University of Cambridge. Prof. Fowler, who is now forty-nine years of age, has had a brilliant career at Cambridge. So long ago as 1914 he was elected a fellow of Trinity College, and he received the Adams Prize in 1925 for an essay on "The Physical State of Matter at High Temperature". In 1932 he was appointed to one of the John Humphrey Plummer professorships established at Cambridge in the previous year, namely, that of mathematical physics. His election to the Royal Society came in 1925, and he was awarded one of the Society's Royal Medals in 1936. Prof. Fowler's scientific work includes the development of a general theory of statistical mechanics, with applications of outstanding importance to the equilibrium of mixed crystals and to the theory of semi-conductors. His work on the photo-electric effect led to a means of determining the true threshold frequencies. He has also developed new aspects of the quantum theory of energy exchange between gases and solids. Finally, by his application of the developing quantum theory to the solution of problems under investigation by groups of experimental physicists working in close association with him at Cambridge, he has made contributions of fundamental importance to both theoretical and practical physics.

Sir Thomas Middleton, K.C.I.E., F.R.S.

THE Committee of the Privy Council for the Organization and Development of Agricultural Research, after consultation with the members of the Agricultural Research Council and the president of the Royal Society, has appointed Sir Thomas H. Middleton to be chairman of the Agricultural Research Council as from July 1. On that date the Right Hon. Lord Richard Cavendish, who has been chairman of the Council since its inception in June 1931, retires from membership of the Council. Sir Thomas Middleton, who is vice-chairman of the Development Commission, an office which he has held since 1929, has been a member of the Agricultural Research Council since its establishment. He is chairman of one Standing Committee of the Council on Soils and Plant Nutrition and of the Committee on the Estimates of Research Institutions. Sir Thomas has been successively professor of agriculture in Baroda College, India, lecturer in agriculture in the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, professor of agriculture in Durham College of Science, and professor of agriculture at Cambridge. In 1906 he joined the staff of the Board of Agriculture and