

Scholarship. At Oxford he performed the unusual feat of a first class in both Classical and Mathematical Moderations before taking a first in Greats in 1881. In the following year he was elected fellow of Lincoln College, where he remained until his appointment to the chair of philosophy in Manchester in 1893. He held this chair until his retirement in 1924, and he stayed faithful to Manchester to the end of his life. As presenter for honorary degrees until 1930 and as honorary professor he kept in close touch with the University. He lectured frequently in Manchester and elsewhere as long as his strength allowed. The University of Manchester possesses a fine bronze bust by Epstein which has preserved the severe beauty of his bearded head, but leaves the beholder to guess the kindness and humour that were also visible in life.

Alexander's philosophical writings are none of them 'popular' and are not to be read without intellectual effort; but given that effort they are found to be clear and straightforward and free of unnecessary technicalities. His first book, "Moral Order and Progress" (1889), which was awarded the Green Moral Philosophy Prize, was written before he developed his characteristic views. The long interval between this and the appearance of his chief work, "Space, Time, and Deity" (1920), filled with only one small book on "Locke" (1908), represents the incubation period of his philosophy. The first expositions of his views, in short papers from 1907 onwards, appeared at the time to be excessively paradoxical and made little impression. The invitation to Glasgow as Gifford Lecturer in 1916-18 was therefore well timed to induce him to develop his whole system in one comprehensive work. Later books are: "Spinoza and Time" (1921), "Art and the Material" (1925), "Beauty and Other Forms of

Value" (1933). His numerous papers in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Mind*, and other journals have not been published in book form.

In spite of his deafness, Alexander was the most sociable of men. He never forgot old friends and continually made new ones. People of all kinds and all ages were equally drawn to him. He was a witty speaker on social occasions, and his technique in presenting honorary graduands will long be remembered: a dexterous mixture of information and compliment spiced with gentle malice. The various honours bestowed on him of late years gave him unaffected pleasure: they merely confirmed his modest belief that people were kinder to him than he deserved. Though all his life a poor man who spent more on others than himself, during the last few years he gave to the funds for Jewish refugees as though his wealth was unlimited.

At the end, Alexander was ready and even glad to die, tired perhaps of a world where the insane persecution of his people has begun again, and where the reason and humanity in which he had put his faith seem to be fighting a losing battle. A. D. R.

WE regret to announce the following deaths:

Sir Philip Dawson, a distinguished electrical engineer, who received the George Stephenson Gold Medal of the Institution of Civil Engineers and also the Albert Medal of the Royal Society of Arts, on September 24, aged seventy-one years.

Lord Marks, known for his work in civil, mechanical, hydraulic and electrical installations, and founder of the firm of Marks and Clerk, patent agents, with which the late Sir Dugald Clerk was associated, on September 24, aged eighty years.

News and Views

Development of Museums and Galleries

THE Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries, of which Sir Evan Charteris is chairman, has just issued its second report, covering the five years 1934-38 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1938. 9d. net). The Commission was appointed in 1931 to advise generally on questions relevant to the most effective development of the national museums and galleries of Great Britain. The report surveys the very considerable building developments which have taken place in the period under review and directs attention especially to the part played in this by private benefactors: Lord Duveen's provision of sculpture galleries at the Tate Gallery, and one for the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum; also Sir James Caird's benefactions to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, and the gifts made by Sir Alexander Grant to the National Library of Scotland, are referred to. The Commission was invited by

the Treasury to advise on the general proposals for future building schemes, which would cost some £1,000,000, and to indicate an order of priority for them. Its recommendations, which it is understood have been accepted, provide for the entomology block of the Natural History Museum (second half), and the lecture hall for the Royal Scottish Museum being begun in 1938 and completed in 1939. These are to be followed by the central section of the Science Museum in 1940, the northern wing of the Natural History Museum in 1941, and the Museum of Ethnography in 1942, these being completed in from two to four years.

THE Commission has also been asked to advise on the future development of the site at South Kensington, which has of late been under consideration and was discussed in a leading article in *NATURE* of September 17. Final plans are not yet available and

they will need careful consideration and discussion; nevertheless, more adequate accommodation for the collections of the Science Museum seems at last to be in sight. The formation of a collection of ship models at the National Maritime Museum has raised the question of what should be the appropriate spheres of this Museum and the Science Museum in representing naval architecture; the Commission has gone carefully into the matter and has proposed certain broad principles of development which it recommends for future guidance. The abolition of fees for admission to museums and galleries, where these are still imposed, is strongly recommended.

Man or Gannets

A CIRCULAR letter, signed by Sir Montagu Sharp, chairman of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and Mr. John M. Crosthwaite, honorary secretary of the Scottish Society for the Protection of Wild Birds, has been received by NATURE and has been widely circulated in the daily newspapers. It states that the inhabitants of Lewis capture and preserve for winter food some two thousand nestling gannets, after a journey over some 40 miles of open sea to the uninhabited islet of Sula Sgeir; sarcastic comment is made on "the apparent plight of the inhabitants . . . that of necessity they have to eat Gannets", and suggests that this wilful destruction of these birds for human food should be stopped. The letter further states, inaccurately, that such slaughter is without precedent in Great Britain. This is scarcely correct. Historically, the use for human food of the nestlings of the birds which frequent certain bird rocks in Scotland in great numbers is an ancient practice which throughout centuries has made no appreciable difference to the bird populations. In Edinburgh the nestlings of gannets from the Bass Rock used to be sold in the streets, as a luxury and not as something which suggested the plight of starvation or lack of "sufficient food of a more ordinary and palatable kind", as the signatories describe it. At the time when St. Kilda was most prosperous, its people preserved and fed annually upon, not two thousand, but many thousands of fulmar petrels, and if the stoppage of that source of food supply has had any effect upon the fulmar population, it has been to threaten to make that bird a nuisance on certain parts of the coast of the mainland.

THE circular states that in order to bring about the protection of gannets of Sula Sgeir, the County Council was approached by the signatories or the societies they represent and "urged" to take the necessary action to make this island a bird sanctuary, so that the men of Ness could be prosecuted if they took the birds. The County Council refused to take any steps in the matter on the grounds that the gannets constituted in money and food a great aid to the livelihood of the people of Ness. Presumably the County Council, composed of local representatives, knows what it is talking about, and presumably some urge greater than useless destruction causes

these crofters of Ness to cross forty miles of the open Atlantic and to spend an uncomfortable fortnight on an isolated island collecting these winter food stores. But a curious situation has been reached when sentimental regard would insist that the welfare of birds should be preferred to the welfare of human beings.

Influence of Science on Current Thought

THE fifth lecture of a series on the influence of science and research upon current thought, established by the Carnegie Institution of Washington in honour of Mr. Elihu Root, who was, until his death last year, a member of the board of trustees of the Institution and its chairman during the last twenty-four years of his life, will be delivered by Sir Richard Gregory in the Institution's new auditorium on December 8. The subject will be "Cultural Contacts of Science"; and the lecture will, therefore, be concerned mainly with associations of science with religion, literature and other aspects of intellectual development and social evolution, rather than with the services rendered to modern communities by utilitarian applications of scientific knowledge. As Mr. Root was deeply interested in the relation between the advance of science and development of human values, it is appropriate that this should be the general theme of the series of lectures bearing his name. The lectures are published in book form after their delivery. The subject of the fourth lecture in the series was "The Concept of Uniformity: Growth and Reactions", by Dr. F. H. Seares, assistant director of Mount Wilson Observatory.

Roman Dorchester

ON September 26 the foundation stone of the new Shire Hall in Colliton Park, Dorchester, was laid by Lord Shaftesbury. This building is probably unique in Great Britain in that it is the first to be erected on the site since Roman times, and also because there will stand near by, permanently preserved, one of the residential buildings of the Roman town of Durnovaria, brought to light by the excavations of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, which were initiated under the direction of Lieut.-Colonel C. D. Drew when attention was directed to the existence of Roman remains at this point by the preparations for building. Further discoveries are still being made. Colonel Drew records the discovery of a fine tessellated pavement of geometrical design. It had been broken in ancient times, and in the fracture was found a delicate Roman balance in bronze, which probably had been used for goldsmith's work. The beam was three inches long only. One of the pans was intact, the other in fragments. The pavement is to be removed to the adjacent Roman dwelling, and the balance has been set up in the Dorchester Museum. Further work in the examination of the neighbouring town wall in the North Walk reveals that on this side there was no stone wall, such as was found recently below Colliton Walk. Here an earthen rampart had the natural reinforcements of the river and marshy ground.