

NATURE

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CONTENTS

	Page
Centenary of the House of Macmillan	231
Mass Observation of the People. By Lieut. T. H. Hawkins	235
Marvels of the Vertebrate Eye. By Prof. H. E. Roaf	236
The Extreme Properties of Matter. By Sir Charles Darwin, K.B.E., F.R.S.	237
Research in the Netherlands Indies. By Dr. P. Honig	242
Origin of Malignant Tumour Cells. By Dr. P. C. Koller	244
News and Views	247
Letters to the Editors:	
A Simple Method of Demonstrating the Circular Polarization of Ionospherically Reflected Radio Waves.—Sir Edward Appleton, K.C.B., F.R.S.	250
Absolute X-ray Wave-lengths.—Dr. H. Lipson and Dr. D. P. Riley	250
Penillic Acid, an Optically Active Acid from Penicillin.—W. M. Duffin and Dr. S. Smith	251
Linkage of Physico-Chemical Processes in Biological Systems.—Prof. E. J. Conway and E. O'Malley	252
Mechanism of Lysis of Red Blood Cells.—Lieut.-Colonel Brian Maegraith, Brigadier G. M. Findlay and Major N. H. Martin	253
A New Land Nemertean.—August Brinkmann, jun.	253
Middle-Piece Beads in the Cavia Spermatozoon.—Prof. J. Brontë Gatenby and L. Collery	253
The Countryside As It Was.—H. J. Massingham; Dr. E. W. Russell	254
National Research Council of Canada	255
Scientific Progress since 1840	257
A Spread-Scale Recorder	257
Recent Scientific and Technical Books	Supp. ii

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CENTENARY OF THE HOUSE OF MACMILLAN

THE House of Macmillan, as a publishing firm, is a hundred years old. Daniel and Alexander Macmillan founded the firm in 1843, and their first two books, A. R. Craig's "The Philosophy of Training" and W. H. Miller's "The Three Questions: What am I? Whence came I? Whither do I Go?" were published during that year.

Birth and Growing Pains

Daniel and Alexander were both sons of Scottish peasants. Daniel was born in the island of Arran on September 13, 1813; but the family migrated to Irvine, on the opposite coast, when Daniel was three years old. Daniel eventually went to Glasgow where he made several faithful friends, such as Dr. George Wilson, the technologist and author of the "Five Gateways of Knowledge", and Mr. J. MacLehose, who eventually became Glasgow's leading bookseller and publisher, and whose firm to-day is the Glasgow University Press, with whom the House of Macmillan still enjoys happy collaboration. Indeed, Daniel was very fortunate in his friends, and the fruits of such friendships are still being garnered by the present-day firm and the public it serves so well.

In 1833, Daniel came to London. He joined the firm of Simpkin Marshall, but was not content there. He spent some time considering going to Cambridge after failing to obtain a post with the publishing firm of Longman. It is just as well at this stage to examine the character of one of the two most important founders of this great firm. Before leaving London, Daniel decided to see the sights; his letters to various relatives and friends bring out the character of the man. For example, in a letter to his brother William, written on September 30, 1833, he says:

"The top of St. Paul's. What a sight. To see all London, even its highest spires, under one's feet, to think of the many thousand souls that are busy in that mighty mass of brick; the number of sailors who are now busy among yon forestry of masts; the numbers who are dying; the numbers who are just entering upon life. To think of those who are enduring pain, and those who are enjoying pleasure; of the villains and the saints; the active and the indolent; the virtuous and the vicious; the pious and the profane: the prodigiously rich and the miserably poor: the noble and the mean, who inhabit or infest that marvellous and mighty place, improving or injuring its morals, saving or destroying its souls. It is awful beyond description. I can hardly bear it."

Daniel Macmillan was a man who admitted to and performed a mission in life, a man who recognized a debt to society—a very practical sociologist. And like all such individuals, he was impetuous beyond belief. His impetuosity remained with him to the day of his death on June 27, 1857, when, as Thomas Hughes, author of "Tom Brown's School Days", wrote of him: "In a few hours the impetuous spirit

was at rest". Here we had a man who, in his impetuosity, was striving to give something to the world, and who, therefore, like his brother Alexander, did not miss his greatest chances in life by wasting time calculating what he himself was to get out of it. Those who, under the cloak of service to humanity, are really seeking self-aggrandizement (and such exist even in the scientific world) might with profit study the lives of such people as the founders of the House of Macmillan.

Cambridge Days

At Cambridge, Daniel Macmillan joined Mr. Johnson, a bookseller, but three years afterwards, in 1837, he left again, having made many friends, some of them rising men in the University. Later, he came to London and entered Messrs. Seeley of Fleet Street, where he was joined by his brother Alexander in 1839. Alexander was five years younger than Daniel, and was a village schoolmaster near Paisley when he left Scotland for London.

After working very hard against considerable poverty, the two brothers, in February 1843, were able to claim independence and they opened a shop in Aldersgate Street, London, with little or no capital to back them up. However, on the advice of Archdeacon Hare, whose reputation at Cambridge was then at its height, the Macmillan brothers transferred their business to Cambridge towards the end of 1843, and there, until Hare's death on January 23, 1855, both brothers, especially Daniel, came under the influence of the Archdeacon.

Daniel married Francis Orridge, daughter of a Cambridge pharmaceutical chemist, on September 4, 1850. Their first boy, Frederick (afterwards Sir Frederick), was born in 1851, and the second, Maurice, in 1853.

The Cambridge book-selling business of the Macmillans flourished in spite of Daniel's ill-health and the firm's lack of sound financial backing. The success was probably due initially to the peculiar experience and whole sympathies of Daniel, and to the enthusiastic support of Archdeacon Hare. Both brothers established good relations with the University undergraduates. As one of their earliest customers wrote :

"When the Macmillans first established their shop in the heart of the University, on a well-chosen site opposite the gates of the Senate House, the undergraduates felt that with men hardly older than ourselves there was opened to us a new sphere of interest. They were the first booksellers whom I, for my own part, had ever known to take an enthusiastic interest in their business and to have a literary insight below the binding of their books."

Thus the Macmillans gained and developed the confidence of the university men—undergraduates and authorities alike. Writing to Thomas Hughes of Daniel Macmillan, the then Headmaster of Uppingham said :

"He stands out in my memory perhaps the most distinct personality of my early manhood—the

embodiment of gentle, thoughtful power, which attracted one exceedingly, and lives with me still."

Among the regular visitors to the Macmillan shop were the 'Olympian Thompson', W. G. Clerk the mathematicians Todhunter and Barnard Smith and the three great Cambridge scholars, Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort. Alexander was also a close friend of Clerk Maxwell.

Congratulations and encouragement were, now pouring in on the young brothers, so that within the first year at Cambridge, the possibilities of a publishing business of their own crept into Daniel's mind, though the smallness of the capital of the bookseller's shop kept the brothers in constant anxiety. However, after bringing in a succession of partners, capital increased, and in 1845, Daniel was at last convinced that the chance of growth for the business lay in the direction of publishing more than book-selling. The advantages which their position at Cambridge, a great literary centre, gave them had become more and more apparent. Here was a mine, hitherto almost unworked, for the best book-producing power, especially of educational books.

Thus Daniel and Alexander Macmillan, although they had to date published only a few works, turned seriously to publishing, and from the very first established and maintained contact with the best writers and editors, especially among the Cambridge men. The close liaison which they developed between themselves and their authors may be illustrated by the following quotation from a letter written by Daniel Macmillan to Charles Kingsley, commenting on the latter's sketch of his projected "Westward Ho!"

"We are greatly taken with all you tell us about the plan and character of your novel. Of course you will not adopt that pseudo-antique manner in which *Esmond*, *Mary Powell*, &c., &c., are written. That style is now getting a bore. The free march of your own style will be much more Elizabethan in manner and tone than any you can assume. We feel sure it will be a right brave and noble book, and do good to England."

A further comment he wrote on Kingsley's proposed "Wonders of the Sea Shore" is so amusing as to deserve quotation here :

"We don't think it will pay to give copies to the country papers. The rascals sell and lend books, and do more harm than good."

During the first period of publishing, lasting for several decades, most of the Macmillan books were, in keeping with the then public and academic taste, on theological or moral philosophical themes.

Daniel Macmillan died at the very early age of forty-six on June 27, 1857, leaving three sons and one daughter. Two of his sons, Frederick and Maurice, eventually became directors of the firm. It was therefore left to his older brother, Alexander, to develop much of the educational side of the Macmillan business and to sow the seed which eventually grew and ripened into the products which academic and

other reading men know so well to-day. Alexander's devotion to F. D. Maurice, the leading Cambridge divine, Archdeacon Hare, Hort, Charles Kingsley, and his affection for Matthew Arnold, John Morley, T. H. Huxley and W. K. Clifford were great assets in helping him to keep in touch with all branches of scholarship in those days.

He, too, like his brother, though deeply religious, was far from being intolerant. This is well illustrated in a letter he wrote to Tennyson, in which, referring to Darwin's "Origin of Species", which had just been published, he said :

"I wish someone could bring out the other side. *But surely the scientific men ought on no account to be hindered from saying what they find are facts*" [italics ours].

The discussions on Darwin's recent publication at one of the Macmillan famous Thursday Evenings held at the Covent Garden premises must have been full of inspiration and have given much food for thought, for such worthies as Huxley, Kingsley, Maurice, Hughes and Masson contributed to them.

Alexander died on January 26, 1896. His son, George, eventually became another director of the firm.

Return to London

In 1858, a London branch of the firm had been opened in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. Then, the remarkable expansion of the business had made it imperative to move the headquarters to London in 1863, and the firm remained in Covent Garden until 1897, when it built its own fine premises in St. Martin's Street, which it still occupies.

Tracing the period from that date to the present day, it is interesting to note that family continuity in the direction of the business has been maintained to a considerable degree. Sir Frederick Macmillan and Mr. Maurice Macmillan, sons of Daniel, and Mr. George Macmillan, son of Alexander, actively directed the firm until their deaths in close succession to each other in 1936. Since then, Mr. Daniel and the Right Hon. Harold Macmillan, sons of Maurice, and Mr. William Macmillan, son of George, have been chairman, vice-chairman and director respectively.

To-day the influence of the House of Macmillan has extended itself to all parts of the world where books are published or eventually find their way. The Macmillan Company of New York, originally founded by the British firm in 1869, has developed into one of the most important publishing houses in the United States. Although now under independent management, it works in close co-operation with the British company. The Macmillan Company of Canada was established in Toronto in 1906, and now occupies a leading position in the Canadian publishing world. The parent British firm has connexions all over the world, publishes books in many different languages, and has three offices in India and one in Australia.

The modern reader of general literature associates the name of Macmillan with such distinguished

authors as Rudyard Kipling, Lewis Carroll, Thomas Hardy, W. B. Yeats, Hugh Walpole, Rebecca West, James Stephens, Pearl Buck, James Hilton, Osbert Sitwell, Mazo de la Roche, to name only a few of the best-known figures in their list. Among the well-known periodicals it publishes are the *Economic Journal*, the *Round Table*, the *Nursing Times* and *NATURE*.

The firm's activities, however, cover the whole range of literature, history, philosophy, economics and sociology, as well as scientific and technical treatises and all classes of educational books from those suitable for nursery schools to well-known university texts.

Readers of *NATURE* will be especially interested in the Macmillan scientific and educational publications—those solid, dependable works, the most successful of which go through edition after edition, and, unlike most fiction which is of an ephemeral nature, remain on the catalogue for decades. These scientific, educational and other works of scholarship have proved to be the backbone of the firm, and a brief review of the development of Macmillans along these lines may give some insight into the *raison d'être* of the present firm as one of the leading British publishers of educational books and periodicals.

"NATURE"

The idea of a weekly journal of science began in 1868 with discussions between Sir Norman Lockyer, the astronomer and spectroscopist, and his friends, among whom were Alexander Macmillan. Lockyer was assured of the support of T. H. Huxley, Tyndall and practically all the other leading workers in science of the time. Alexander Macmillan enlisted the support of Sir Joseph Hooker and other of his scientific friends; but much of the initial success was due to Alexander Macmillan himself, of whom Sir Norman Lockyer once wrote :

"It was in consequence of his sympathy and enthusiastic assistance that the journal started. He was unwavering in his support of the belief that British science would be advanced by a periodical devoted to its interest. . . . It was the hope that a more favourable condition for the advancement of science might be thereby secured that led Mr. Alexander Macmillan to enter warmly into the establishment of *Nature* in 1869."

In this connexion we might quote part of a letter written by Alexander Macmillan to Sir William Thomson (afterwards Lord Kelvin) :

"Lockyer is going to start a weekly Journal of Science, which we are to publish. It is meant to be popular in part, but also sound, and part devoted specifically to scientific men and their intercourse with each other. Huxley, Balfour Stewart, Wilkinson, Tyndall, Roscoe and almost everyone who is about London have given him their names, and he very greatly wishes yours, as among those who promise support. May I tell him you consent?"

The launching of *NATURE* is chronicled in a letter

to the Glasgow bookseller, MacLehose, written on November 3, 1869:

"*Nature* is to be published on Thursday in London at 2.30. . . . Lockyer was peremptory that our publication day should indicate the point to which our information is brought up. The fallacy of a Saturday publication with a Thursday actual information he does not think right. . . . We start with 18 pp. of advertisements. . . . I think it will look nice."

In the complete context of this letter it is worth noting that Sir Norman Lockyer had an absolutely free hand in reviewing books published by the firm of Macmillan itself, and never hesitated to criticize them adversely if he thought they deserved it. This absolute and complete freedom of policy has been extended to the editors of *NATURE* from that day to this.

In 1919, Sir Richard Gregory succeeded Sir Norman Lockyer in the editorial chair of *NATURE*. During his long period of editorship the journal made considerable progress, and its influence in the world of science has gradually become stronger and more secure. To-day it is the leading journal of science. In 1938, Sir Richard Gregory was succeeded jointly by Mr. A. J. V. Gale and Mr. L. J. F. Brimble. The extent to which *NATURE* has now grown, not only in scientific but also sociological influence, must be left to the opinion of its readers.

One thing, however, we think that readers of *NATURE* should know is the great debt which they owe to the publishers. *NATURE* was initially launched and is still being published almost solely for the advancement of science, in spite of the fact that it is privately owned by a business firm. The present editors feel impelled to put on record their gratitude to the present directors of the House of Macmillan for the entirely free hand given them in guiding the policy of *NATURE* and in deciding what shall and what shall not be published. To-day, as much as ever, if *NATURE* feels that in the interests of science and culture, any book, whether published by Macmillans or not, should receive adverse criticism, then it gets it. If *NATURE* desires to follow a certain policy where science is concerned, whether it be against or in support of other authorities, even the Government, then her policy is pursued relentlessly, yet, we hope, with tolerance. The directors never interfere with policy. Rather do they encourage the journal in all manner of ways, some of which have not received the recognition in the past that they deserved. In fact, it is quite possible that had the former directors not been prepared in the interest of scientific development to publish *NATURE* for several decades at a financial loss, *NATURE*, as we now know it, might not be in existence.

To-day, financial problems do not exist, and the considerable help given during the present very difficult times (especially of paper shortage and other exigencies of war) by the directors and their staffs certainly relieve the present editors of a considerable amount of care, and thus contribute in no small way towards the advancement of science in general and the success of *NATURE* in particular.

Educational Books

Text-books and works of scholarship which have emanated from the House of Macmillan have been legion. There has never been anything shoddy or cheap about those publications, for the directors invariably choose their authors with scrupulous care, and having once chosen them give them every possible help towards the best production that can be obtained from a first-class author working in complete harmony with a first-class publisher. In fact, though it is obvious that some works of scholarship, especially the very advanced, can never prove to be paying propositions, that has not deterred the directors from publishing, provided they are assured that in publishing they are contributing towards the advancement of science and culture.

The first directors of the House of Macmillan established a tradition of *esprit de corps* among everyone connected with any book—author, publisher, editor, printer, and all staff concerned—a tradition which is kept very much alive to-day. Contact with authors was always of the closest, and contact and intercourse between different authors was often stimulated through the agency of the directors. This is well illustrated by the list of guests who attended a dinner at the Savoy Hotel on November 22, 1894, to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of *NATURE*.

Mr. F. Macmillan
Mr. G. Macmillan
Mr. M. Macmillan
Mr. G. L. Craik
Mr. J. Norman Lockyer
Sir George Stokes
Dr. D. MacAlister
Prof. Sylvanus Thompson
Prof. H. E. Armstrong
Dr. J. H. Gladstone
Prof. T. G. Bonney
Mr. C. B. Clarke
Dr. D. Ferrier
Prof. R. Meldola
Prof. W. Ramsay
Mr. Hughes Lockyer
Mr. W. Crookes
Dr. E. Klein
Dr. M. Bruce
Dr. W. Hood
Sir J. Crichton Browne
Dr. E. B. Tylor
Dr. P. L. Sclater
Prof. A. G. Greenhill
Prof. H. H. Turner

Sir A. Geikie
Prof. Alfred Newton
Rt. Hon. T. H. Huxley
Sir H. E. Roscoe
Sir John Evans
Mr. F. Galton
Mr. A. E. Shipley
Prof. Marshall Ward
Mr. F. C. Penrose
Sir W. H. Flower
Dr. Michael Foster
Prof. T. E. Thorpe
Mr. J. N. Langley
Prof. G. B. Howes
Mr. W. H. Preece
Capt. Wharton
Prof. Roberts-Austen
Prof. Ray Lankester
Dr. Lauder Brunton
Mr. W. T. Thiselton Dyer
Prof. Burdon Sanderson
Prof. A. W. Rücker
Dr. Thorne Thorne
Mr. D. E. Jones
Prof. C. Allbutt

Present-day readers will note the high percentage of names which have now passed with honour into the annals of scientific research, education and scholarship.

It is not necessary to give an exhaustive list of names of men of science whose text-books, treatises and theses have reached the scientific world through the House of Macmillan; but a few of those whose names appeared in the catalogues of the first forty-odd years of Macmillans make interesting reading. Grouped under their various subjects, the following are examples

Mathematics and Astronomy. Wilson, Todhunter, B. Smith, Christie, C. L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), Airy, Challis, Penrose, Lockyer, Routh.

Physics. Clerk Maxwell, Balfour Stewart, Rayleigh, J. H. Gladstone, Stokes, Oliver Lodge, Tait, Sylvanus Thompson.

Chemistry. Roscoe, Würtz, Watts, Thorpe.

Statistics. F. Galton.

- Geography.* S. W. Baker.
Economics. Alfred Marshall, J. N. Keynes, J. E. Cairnes, H. Fawcett.
Logic. W. S. Jevons, J. Venn.
Geology. Sedgwick, Geikie, Sabine, J. W. Dawson, Boyd Dawkins.
Biology. A. Newton, D. Oliver, T. H. Huxley, A. Russel Wallace, J. D. Hooker, Ray Lankester, H. C. Bastian, Wyville Thomson, T. J. Parker, Williamson, Gilbert White, Pasteur, Lubbock, Bower.
Medicine and Surgery. G. M. Humphry, Acland, J. R. Reynolds, W. H. Flower, Maudsley, Fox, G. Rolleston.
Education. Matthew Arnold, Dean Farrar, Thring, Sonnenschein, Meiklejohn.
Science Primers. These were some of the first attempts to bring authoritative science text-books within the reach of the schools. They began in 1872 with Roscoe's "Chemistry", and this was followed by Michael Foster's "Physiology", Geikie's "Geology" and "Physical Geography", Hooker's "Botany", T. H. Huxley's "Introductory", Jevons' "Logic" and "Political Economy", Norman Lockyer's "Astronomy" and Balfour Stewart's "Physics".
 George Wilson, author of the "Five Gateways of Knowledge" and of several technological books, also figured in the earlier catalogues.

Such men of science, with the essential help of the House of Macmillan, did much towards building the tradition upon which a large number of British educational publications of to-day rest. But progress since those days has been rapid yet sure, so that among the several thousand titles in the present-day Macmillan catalogue can be found many names of first importance in the educational and scientific world.

It is doubtful whether most readers of books realize to what extent those books depend on their publishers as well as their authors. This applies more to educational texts, with graphs, tables, maps, diagrams, and so forth, than to any other type of book; and the same may be said of periodicals.

Among the present directors of Macmillans are two grandsons of the original Daniel Macmillan—Mr. Daniel Macmillan and the Right Hon. Harold Macmillan. At present, Mr. Harold's position as His Majesty's Minister in North Africa is, as one can well imagine, demanding all his attention. Mr. Daniel Macmillan is therefore shouldering a tremendous responsibility; but well and truly is he doing it and thus carrying on the tradition established by his forebears—a staunch friend of NATURE, a keen judge of a good book, and an ardent worker for the advancement of education. In fact, those of us who have the pleasure of knowing him see much of what was clearly manifest in his grandfather. Impetuous to a degree, impatient of trivial matters, and, therefore, what usually goes with such characteristics, indefatigable in his efforts to do a grand job of work. While the House of Macmillan is able to carry on under the direction of men like the present Mr. Daniel Macmillan, NATURE and Macmillan educational policy have nothing to fear. His is a glorious heritage, and we and the whole world of science must offer him our heartiest congratulations on this anniversary.

MASS OBSERVATION OF THE PEOPLE

The Pub and the People

A Worktown Study. Mass Observation. Pp. 350. (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1942.) 16s. net.

MASS Observation is an organization which has been evolved to make objective studies of the way of life of the peoples of Great Britain. The sponsor of the movement, Mr. Tom Harrisson, was formerly a professional anthropologist, who, whilst working on the island of Malekula in the New Hebrides Group, came to the conclusion that the people in the wilds of Great Britain were as much in need of scientific observation as the cannibals of Malekula. On his return to Great Britain he teamed up with a newspaper reporter, Mr. Charles Madge, who was thinking along similar lines. Thus Mass Observation was born. In August 1939 it consisted of a team of whole-time paid investigators and a nation-wide group of voluntary observers providing information about themselves and their neighbours. This by way of introduction to the organization that produced this book.

For the three years prior to the outbreak of war, this group concentrated on an unnamed industrial town in the north of England, which, short of naming it, Mass Observation takes great pains to suggest must be Bolton. Four major points were considered: the role of the public house in the life of the town, politics and the non-voter, the part played by religion and the annual holiday at Blackpool. This volume deals with only the first of these issues, publication of the other three volumes being suspended for the war period.

"The Pub and the People" is neither a scientific report nor a readable collection of essays. Rather is it a collection of verbose—very verbose—superfluities, interspersed with a number of statistics, which, important though they may be, do little but substantiate empirical deductions which one would inevitably make during a period of regular pub-going. If a scientific report had been intended, this volume would not have been greater than one sixth of its present size. If the writers had envisaged a book that would appeal to any intelligent reader, the contained information should have been more carefully collated and edited.

The following are some of the more interesting facts that emerge from this orgy of words. In "Worktown", the ratio of pubs to people has decreased considerably since the Act of 1839 empowered magistrates to refuse to grant the renewal or issue of beer licences. In the pre-1939 period the pub played a smaller part in the life of the town than it ever did. (It is unfortunate that a short appendix could not have been included indicating the effects of the War on the nation's drinking habits.) As a cultural institution, the pub is a declining force. "Pools, radio, press, motor-culture, dance-halls too (to a surprising extent); cinema, do not create a social group of people sharing consciously the same experience. . . . They are slowly changing the whole aspect of England and no one seems to be noticing it." The latter part of this statement is typical of some of the sensational embellishments which clutter up this book; this is bound up with complete disregard for objective truth. A frontal attack is made upon "the irresponsibility and ignorance of scientists", without indications of their deficiencies. Other