survives him. There are thirteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren to carry on his memory.

By the death of Sir Edward Poulton, natural history, as Darwin taught it, has lost a master. He will long be remembered for his life's work at Oxford; from it has flowed inspiration and help to naturalists seeking truth all over the world. They found him a never-failing counsellor and a generous friend whom they learnt to love.

G. D. HALE CARPENTER.

Mr. H. F. Witherby, M.B.E.

THE death of H. F. Witherby on December 11 leaves a gap in the students of British ornithology which will be difficult to replace. He was the second surviving son of Henry Forbes Witherby of Burley, Hants, and was born on October 7, 1873. After leaving school he entered the old family publishing firm of Witherby and Co., and some years ago retired, but resumed work again after the outbreak of war.

Although a successful business man, the study of birds was Witherby's main interest in life, and for this purpose he made many trips abroad in search of birds. He was specially interested in Spanish ornithology, and contributed several papers on this subject to the *Ibis*. Early in his career Witherby became interested in migration, and with the object of studying this phenomena visited many well-known localities on the east coast, and in 1938 even venturing to Fair Isle.

In 1909 he started the 'British Birds' ringing scheme, which from a small beginning has grown to be of national importance and is now carried on from the British Museum under the auspices of the British Trust for Ornithology. In 1907 he founded *British Birds* magazine, and this soon brought him in touch with all those interested in the study of birds in these islands. With the help of others he published a "Handlist of British Birds" in 1912, and

in 1912-24, with the assistance of other ornithologists, a "Practical Handbook of British Birds". When these volumes became out of print he published during 1938-41 a more ambitious work, the "Handbook of British Birds", in five volumes; this has rightly been described as the best book on the birds of any country. Witherby himself was responsible for the systematic work and general editorship.

He had a very fine collection of both British and European birds which he sold to the British Museum, giving the proceeds to the British Trust for Ornithology, a body he took great interest in from the beginning. His collection was very carefully made, mainly for the purpose of studying races and plumages. Together with the late Dr. C. B. Ticehurst he did much to elucidate the moults and sequence of plumage of our native birds—indeed it might be said of European species also. It was Witherby who cleared up the long-disputed question as to how the rook developed its bare face, and in an article in *British Birds* proved it was a matter of age, not wear. Witherby was a very careful and painstaking worker, and would take an enormous amount of trouble before admitting a new species to the British list, or a record of a rare visitor. The late Dr. Hartert may be said to have introduced the trinomial system into ornithology in Great Britain, and Witherby was one of the first to appreciate the importance of this step.

As editor of *British Birds*, Witherby occupied a unique position in the study of our native birds, and he will be sadly missed by his many friends and correspondents; to beginners he was especially helpful and encouraging. During 1924-27 he was chairman of the British Ornithologists' Club, and president of the British Ornithologists' Union during 1933-38. On his retirement he was awarded the Godman-Salvin Medal for his work on ornithology.

In 1904 he married Lilian, daughter of the Rev. S. Gillson, and leaves two sons and three daughters.

N. B. KINNEAR.

NEWS and VIEWS

Secondary Education in Great Britain

THE valuable statement "The Open Door in Secondary Education", issued by the members of the Education Sub-Committee of Nuffield College Social Reconstruction Survey, does full justice to the twin aims of educational reform: maintenance of the quality of the education provided, while making sure that opportunities at present the privilege of a minority become the heritage of the nation. Its six recommendations are accompanied by a brief survey which indicates the rapidity with which opinion has advanced in this field. First, the Statement recommends that in all schools which receive any grants from the State or from local education authorities, tuition should be free and adequate maintenance grants should be given. Secondly, the scales on which grants are made to schools should vary according to the education they provide, especially in equipment, staffing ratio and opportunities for advanced work. To deal with the allocation of grants and with the question of control involved in this second recommendation, establishment by the Board of Education of a school grants central committee on the lines of the University Grants Committee is proposed, assisted by a small number of regional committees.

All schools for children between the ages of eleven

and eighteen should be inspected by the Board of Education at intervals of not more than five years. All private schools which have not yet been formally recognized should be required to obtain from the Board a certificate of efficiency: but no school should be closed by the Board of Education without the right of appeal to an independent tribunal. One member of the Committee, Sir Richard Livingstone, regards this proposal as too drastic and open to abuse, and would tackle the evil of the undesirable school by giving a certificate to schools which submit to voluntary inspection and are approved, or by refusing anyone leave to teach who does not hold a university degree or has not attended an approved course for training in teaching.

The Statement then recommends that the school grants committee and the local education authorities should be empowered to make grants to children to enable them to pass from schools under their jurisdiction to independent private schools if they secure places in them. Maximum grants should be fixed by the school grants committee. Finally, such grants should only be made to children entering schools which observe the following conditions to the satisfaction of the Board of Education: (a) that to the extent of their normal numbers they admit children